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THE ISLE OF LEWIS AND HARRIS

A STUDY IN BRITISH COMMUNITY

by

ARTHUR GEDDES

EDINBURGH
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1955

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291
302
314
415

Photographs by J. Allan Cash

A PEAT-CUTTER

The peats are being carried to the roadside from where they will be carted home

/facing p. iii/

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TO

000 MY ISLAND HOSTS

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PREFACE

121 discovers the strength of community life. And by his
[181] renewal of ' racial ' experience he may rediscover sides of
his own nature untouched by an urban task or a rural
[128] holiday. Hence a book such as this inevitably, and I think
rightly, contains much that has been felt in a personal way.
Yet to offset personal limitations, there is needed objective
survey, geographical and social, applied with an open mind
and submitted to searching criticism. These two sides,
personal and impersonal, I have tried to combine.

114 The initiation of this work owes much to others, in
ways of which they were never to know: to the chieftain,
farmer and scholar, James Archibald Campbell of Barbreck,
to my brother Alasdair, to my father, Patrick Geddes, who
suggested in 1919 to the first Lord Leverhulme that
Marcel Hardy, scientist and farmer, should survey the land
in Lewis-and-Harris; to Lord Leverhulme, and to Dr.
Hardy himself, whom I then assisted. To Mr. T. B.
Macaulay, LL.D., was due the suggestion and the plea,
made ten years later, that I should bring up to date Dr.
Hardy's MS. report.

121 It was because of Dr. Macaulay's faith in the Island's
future and the aid he generously gave to experiments in the
reclamation of peat, and also because of the Islanders' own
response to his lead, that I accepted this voluntary task.
Acceptance, as it proved, was rash. Except for certain
valuable findings included under Dr. Hardy's name, a new
[101] work had to be written. These circumstances led to the
making of the book, stretched over thirty-five years. Certain
[178] early hopes recorded here have been frustrated. On the
other hand, developments have taken place which few
could have foreseen but for their faith in the future of the
Island and its people. I trust that in this book the advantages
of slow growth outweigh the drawbacks, for time

PREFACE

121 178 allows one to revise judgments in a way not possible in a short-term study. And only by prolonged knowledge of the Island can one hope to appreciate the changes which have been taking place, and the trends of today.

123 My chief debts are the hardest of all to acknowledge, namely the patient guidance, information and hospitality so freely given, as I tramped from end to end of the Island or stayed in chosen townships. Indeed, my debt extends beyond the Island, from glens in the mainland to the southern Hebrides. The debt for specific information received is the harder to acknowledge since, again and again, I was invited to utilise information on condition of silence as to its source. Many statements given here would gain in authority if their source, whether private or semi-official, could be given; but this has frequently been impossible without violation of confidence. Hence my thanks go out to many anonymous crofters, schoolmasters and residents and also to officials, particularly of the Boards or Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries, Labour 000 and the Post Office. There are also those whom I cannot leave unnamed, particularly the late Mr. W. J. Gibson, C.B.E., Mr. Angus MacLeod, B.Sc. (Agric.), Dr. R. M. Craig, Miss Bruce of the Highland Home Industries, Mr. J. S. Grant of the *Stornoway Gazette*, Mr. Malcolm MacLeod, D.Litt., Mr. A. M. Macmillan, C.I.E., Mr. John Forbes and Professor A. C. O'Dell. The late Professor Alan G. Ogilvie, Professor H. J. Fleure, LL.D., F.R.S., Professor W. Croft Dickinson, M.C., and the late Mr. Adam Collier also advised me most helpfully.

For the loan of blocks I am indebted to Professor A. Stevens and Dr. R. M. Craig, and to the Editors of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* and of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.*

PREFACE

122

Finally, I have to thank the Carnegie Universities Trust for Scotland for their grants towards the cost of illustrations (particularly of the coloured map of vegetation, printed by Messrs. John Bartholomew & Sons); and the Trustees of the Wyer Fund for Regional Survey of the Outlook Tower Association, for certain expenses in the preparation of the MS. and for publishing in 1952 " Resources and Prospects of the Isle of Lewis and Harris", reprinted hy courtesy of the Editor of the *Stornoway Gazette*, 1952.

A. G.

1954

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Island, Work and People

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The maps from region to island with plans from town to homesteads exemplify space in scale; the graphs exemplify dynamic elements of energy in time

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PART ONE

ISLAND, WORK AND PEOPLE

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CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

(A) THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING: THE BRITISH ISLES, SCOTLAND AND THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLES

181

1. A 'Heart' of the 'North and West' of Britain

(131) (133) (174) In the 'Outer' Hebrides, commonly regarded as the most 'outlying' inhabited lands of the British Isles, are revealed not only the most ancient of British rocks, the Archaean, but probably the oldest form of communal life in Britain. This life, in present and past, will interest

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131
133

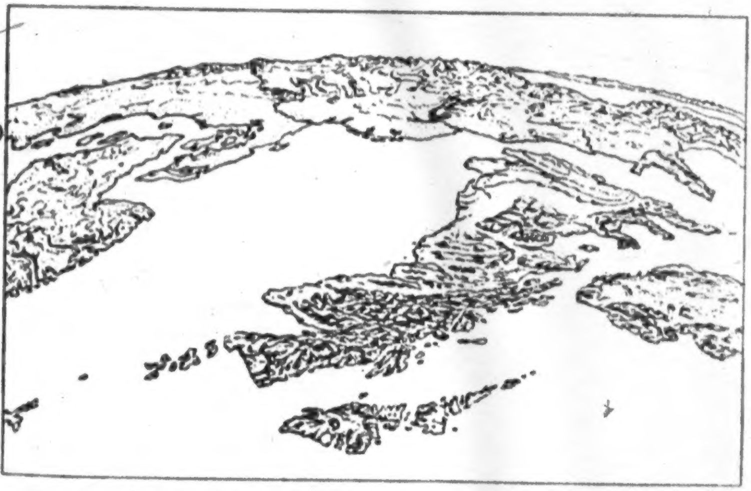

FIG. 1.—Global view of the 'Outer' Hebrides, seen as the heart of the 'North and West' of Britain.

181 [171] [133] some by characteristics which may seem unique. But it will interest others by features of underlying universality. These might be compared to the Archaean rock, overlain toward the south-east by a succession of younger strata, but forming their foundation.

181 182 In this rocky land, the roots of Island life are laid bare; the rhythm of work responds to the day's weather and the cycle of the year. Yet the flowering of communal life in song and spiritual tradition may offer a fresh vision of regional, even of national, being. Indeed it is in characteristics latent in the evolution of the whole 'North and West' of the British Isles that Island life is most revealing.

131 133 [829] Rising in imagination to a point above the summits of the Harris hills, and viewing the British Isles from the 'far' north-west, we gain a new perspective (Fig. 1). The Island below us is now the nearest; the 'Outer' Isles, the innermost. To us now, as to the Islesmen, their Island home is no mere fringe, but a heart of Britain.

101 133 Thence, looking to the lands across the Minch, each further from the Isles of home, there appear, in turn, three regions: (1) the rest of the Highlands and Isles; (2) the Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland; and (3) Ireland, Wales and Cornwall, and Northern England—all sculptured in rocks older than those of the Lowland or 'Plain' of England beyond. These three roughly concentric regions, from Harris to the edge of the 'Plain', may be grouped together with the intervening estuarine lowlands—not only Clydeside and the Solway but the 'firth-land' of Mersey-and-Deeside, and that of the Bristol Channel. To these, one might add the shores of an outer Minch, the *Manche* or 'English' Channel, which once linked Devon and Cornwall to Armorica. Beyond

101 133 Britain, on the horizon, the eye may descry the coasts of Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France and Iberia. This far-flung regional grouping within the British Isles—which extends for 800 miles from the Shetland to the Scilly Isles—may be called 'the North and West'.

Four border-lines may be drawn to bound these regions: the hill-foot 'Highland Line', the Scottish Border, the border of Wales with the Pennine-and-Moorland-foot, and lastly, for the whole, a line drawn from the Severn to the Tees. Of these four lines (or border-tracts), the last, which divides the British Isles into two different types of landscape and life, is not the least significant. On one side lies the whole of 'the North and West', with its isles and headlands, its mountains and hills, hewn in old rock, and its firthlands, straths and marginal, hill-foot lowlands, all sculptured markedly both by rivers and ice, and heaped with glacial drift. On the other lies the 'Plain' of south-eastern England, or simply 'the South-east', of which the low scarplands of younger rocks slope smoothly down to mainly river-sculptured vales, and are bounded by smoother coasts.[1]

133 131 Geographically, this succession is one of complexes with recurrent features of height and hollow, land and sea, rather than of sharply defined blocks; its marches are tracts of transition rather than boundary lines. But essential characters of the two zones are revealed by the main boundary

---

[823] [1] Strictly, the alternation of vales with wolds and downs, which characterises England south-east of the Pennines, would justify the term 'lowland'; but with our Scottish and Highland perspective, the English 'lowland' appears a 'plain', and for simplicity, the 'Plain', or simply 'the South-east', is used throughout this book. The physical and geological maps of the British Isles in an atlas may serve to illustrate this perspective; they should be viewed from the north-west by turning the map with the north-west islands towards one, and the plains of England and the Continent furthest away.

133 line; and there can be no doubt of the contrast found at
131 the extremes. How strikingly different from any view
over the English Plain is this, from the air or a mountain-top! It overlooks the ice-scraped rock of the fells; the drift-heaped, ill-drained hollows studded with gleaming lochs and deeply overgrown with peat; and the indented, insular coastline with its widely spaced crofting townships looking seaward, where a few fishers' sails may dot the
161 vast expanse of ocean. In 1951 the population of Lewis-
162 and-Harris numbered only 28,000 persons, and that of the
182 entire Outer Hebrides some 36,000; but the small numbers need not lessen the geographical significance of the community.

18 Men have long recognised the homogeneity of the English 'Plain', with its recurring vale and wold, compact within a rounded coastline. In spite of the local variety of landscape, history or dialect, which enriched its heritage and compose its grandeur and charm, men have sensed the unity inherent in this land of a single tongue, centred upon a single capital. By contrast, the diversities in landscape, life and tongues of the lands far-flung to north and west have obscured the elements of a profound, underlying unity in geographic origins and in historic and social
[121] evolution. To understand the civilisation of the British Isles, it is vital first to perceive the complementary qualities found in the two great regions, and face their corresponding
[178] weaknesses or limitations. Second, within the less understood of the two regions, 'the North and West', it is vital to study the almost bewildering variety in regional types of life—distinguishing, for instance, the uprooted populations all too typical of the rural Lowlands of Scotland or Northumberland from the still deep-rooted communities of the Highlands and Isles.

CH. I ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

121 From prehistory to the present day, these geographic
178 zones have played their parts as factors in evolution,
although the border-lines have changed at different historic
174 crises, and have been modified by economic and social
182 phase. At times the Hebrides have been more closely
linked to Ulster or to Norway than to Central Scotland.
184 In viewing these zones, we shall not find simultaneity in
historic events, but comparability in stage and transition,
even at differing periods. From the evolutionary point of
view, the revealing character of Island life lies not only in
static survivals, in what Sir Arthur Mitchell found in the
Isles and vividly described as " the Past in the Present ".
Island life is characterised still more by the dynamic
strength of its continuity—notably of early or primitive
Christianity—and also by the late occurrence of changes
when, at last, they came.

18 The social consequences of these regional differences
62 in evolution are profound. In the ' Plain ', to the south-east
of the Severn-Tees line, large village communities
174 with ' common fields ' prevailed, forming the later manor
[423] villages. To the north and west, the more varied, hillier
lands encouraged the continuance of hamlets. These
[192] hamlets housed close-knit groups of families, often of no
more than four or five to a dozen relations or ' friends '—
—in Scots even today (much as in Gaelic) the word
' friend ' frequently implies kinship. Each small group
[462] formed a team. Together the men ploughed their mingled
rigs (or ridges) and herded their stock in common, and
[476] on the coast they rowed their boat as its crew. The
[241] women, too, did much together, as when they spun their
[286] yarn, and fulled or ' waulked ' the cloth that one of them
had woven, helping by turn in childbirth and child-care.
[423] Usually several of these teams were linked in a larger

18
621 pastoral group, the germ (in the Hebrides) of the present
township with its common grazing. Hamlets and township
174 formed circles of cultural and religious life in common.
[423] These 'sociable hamlets', or 'little commonwealths', as
they were called by understanding writers on the Highlands,
lived on in the Hebrides almost until a century ago.
Features of their form and life have long been known, but
their life has not yet been envisaged in its full dynamic
significance.

127 The homesteads, informally grouped in these small
36 hamlets, have been mistakenly described as solitary or
'dispersed' by scholars accustomed to larger and more
174 compact grouping. The mistake was made by geographers
[423] of the nineteenth century, such as Meitzen with reference
to the hamlets of Brittany. Similarly, because of the
[476] small number composing a typical joint team, the vital
fact of team-work and joint holding has frequently been
overlooked; yet a fundamental mistake is made when such
close-knit team-work and joint tenure are described as
174 'individualistic'. Moreover, these teams were linked together
621 in larger, more loosely bound pastoral communities
631 of township and district. In Scotland and elsewhere, it is
true, such hamlets came historically to be split up in various
[241] ways, into smaller farms and scattered cottages. The
larger link of common life was also superseded by the
[178] proprietor's estate. Indeed, the twofold revolution involved
caused a fundamental regional cleavage within 'the
North and West'.

[182] Partly as a result of their small size, the tenure of farm-hamlets
was frequently informal. In northern England,
[184] the hamlets and their lands were not entered in Domesday
Book; still less are early entries complete in Scotland.
[178] For this and other reasons, jurist and historian may fail

174 to notice the absorption or suppression of rights held in
621 common in 'the North and West', together with the
631 abolition of the duties of fellow-workers to one another.
178 Too frequently they have not troubled to enquire into the
former existence of common rights and fellowship duties,
184 the observances of which have so much to teach. Yet to
judge from the completeness of the Hebridean evidence,
and from wider evidence to be touched upon with reference
to Norse and Lowland conditions, suppression caused
a profound social and moral revolution.

178 Indeed, the profound character of that revolution makes
184 it hard to recognise the common origin of features which
may differ greatly today. To choose four examples, the
[428] long succession from father to son, found from end to end
[166] of an Island township, contrasts with a restless movement
of farm servants, and even tenant-farmers, all too common
until 1939 in Lowland Scotland and parts of Northern
[181] England. The ideals held by fellow-workers in Gaelic
tradition, of kindly and courteous co-operation, contrast
with the avowals of rugged individualism made on many a
farm even of the southern Highlands today, and certainly of
[291] the Scottish Lowlands and Northern England. Languages
have changed as English has advanced during 1500 years:
the Lewis crofters' children still speak Gaelic, but children
in Stornoway ceased to do so forty or fifty years ago.
[771] And in the recorded religious life of Gaelic hamlets far
from any priest (or later, minister), the part of revered men
and women is very different from the part played in
Calvinism by the Minister and the male Elders of the
Kirk. All these four contrasts are due to revolutionary
changes in home, work, language and religion. Such
changes, of which all trace may be lost elsewhere, are
traceable from the fullest evidence among the Gael.

184 Comparisons at the present day are most illuminating.
[791] In the Hebrides one may pass from Calvinist Lewis-and-Harris to Catholic Barra, through South Uist, where
Presbyterian and Roman Catholic dwell, side by side, in
mutual respect. Although their home life, economy and
language are the same, the influence of a comparatively
[121] recent divergence in religion is marked. Such Island
evidence, present and past, forces one to re-examine conclusions upon life in the Lowlands accepted until recently,
and to seek for the truth upon earlier forms of life in
common and for their meaning today throughout 'the
North and West'.

175 Ancient elements of unity, and later ways in which
423 these were broken, adapted or remade, region by region,
are being unravelled. The Old Estate Plans, made at the
427 outset of the agricultural revolution, show these immedi-
621 ately before the re-planning of fields and farms (*circa*
1750–90). These plans also reveal the existence of still
178 earlier types, not otherwise recognisable even on the spot.
[184] With their rentals (when available) they reveal the ways
in which old joint farms were placed under a single tenant,
as in Lothian, or were split up among several tenants, as
in Ayrshire.[1] From such geographical data, both the
economic and the deeper social aspects of rural life emerge
with new clarity. Such data may be linked to Planning
Surveys of land and rural life for tomorrow.

621 Now, although so fundamentally equalitarian within
427 themselves, these hamlet communities of the Gael were
subjected to the overlordship of a chief or laird, either
directly or through an intermediate gentleman-tenant, a
[174] 'tacksman'. History, with archaeology read in history's

---

[172] [1] For Lothian, see Arthur Geddes (1938 and 1951); for Ayrshire, see
J. H. G. Lebon, *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, Vols. 62, 1945 (pp. 7-13); 63, 1946
(pp. 100-110). Further references in Bibliography.

[113]

621 427 174 [172] light, suggests that such lordship goes back to early conquests of self-supporting agricultural and pastoral communities by well-armed raiders of many races, including the Celtic-speaking swordsmen of the Iron Age. The last and most notable of these conquering raiders were the Norsemen. Their influence was profound, whether, sailing direct from the Scandinavian forest settlements and fjords, they raided and settled as heathen Viking crews, or, at a later stage, they invaded England from Normandy—that fertile province which they had made theirs in fact and name—under the panoply of civilisation and with Papal benediction. A generation after the Conquest they commenced the penetration of Scotland.

183 181 [114] The paradox of loyalty to one's fellows with loyalty to a lord, of stoutly equalitarian thinking bound up with fervid admiration for an aristocracy, is nowhere more marked than among the Gael. They sought to reconcile these conflicting loyalties by claiming common ancestry for chief and people, as the children (*clann*) of a hero of history or myth. The years 1945-47, which marked a centenary of the last of the desperate Jacobite Risings, stood at the close of the latest of many wars in which fame has been won for the symbol of clanship—the tartan, long proscribed (by the Act of 1747) 'to every man and boy in the Highlands'. At such a time, the Gaels' loyalty to the death cannot be forgotten although old kings, old [121] [182] [184] chiefs have gone. But its paradox must not only be remembered but understood, from its roots in communal life and environment through history. Not until this is done can important phases of our own time be understood, such as the failure of Lord Leverhulme's seven years' endeavour in Lewis; nor can the present opportunity of Highland renewal be grasped by the help of

183

181 democratic reorganisation, with loyalty to one's fellows and
185 to a leader.

Here again, Lewis-and-Harris may have something to
178 teach, as one of the last communities in Britain in which
185 much of ancient common right over land and sea has been
upheld. Trust ownership of Stornoway estate has strength-
[174] ened the possibilities of rural planning there, while the
[423] fisheries are a public resource which are partially protected
for local fishermen inshore and farther out are closed to
none. The useful Lewis Association has published models
of local survey for social and economic planning. At a
time when democracy is struggling to see its way towards
economic and social freedom, such communal initiatives
have more than local significance.

121 This sketch of comparisons and questions in rural life
131 raised by Hebridean evidence, through a wide and varied
region of the British Isles, must serve to indicate the geo-
182 graphic setting of the Island and relate the historic and
contemporary problems of its own community to wider
fields. This book is not directly concerned with the urban
and industrial problems of the firth-sides and 'included
plains' within the varied land of 'the North and West'
of Britain, deeply though they affect the hard-hit fishermen
of the Isles and the Island migrants—seamen or labourers,
tradesmen or factory workers, nurses, teachers or clergy.
121 Even for the migrants' sake, it is vital to maintain the
185 economic balance, and restore the cultural and spiritual
life within each industrial region, in order to maintain
that of Britain as a whole. It was not enough to schedule
'the murdered towns' of Tyneside, Wales, Lancashire
or Clydeside as 'Distressed', 'Special or Development
Areas'. The balance of Britain as a whole must be
restored.

121 And region by region, a fairer balance must be struck
185 between country and town. In Lewis, the part of Stornoway
town, with its population nearing 5000 (in 1951), is
[162] important. Its port, its fisheries, its spinning mills for the
[184] crofters' hand-loom weaving, its merchants' shops, and its
local, administrative and professional services, are essential
to the Island. Its economic and social evolution, too, are
[162] interesting. Stornoway's plans for the future are active
and ambitious, and these, it is realised, depend upon the
prosperity of the 19,000 crofting people of Lewis proper.

121 But the subject of this book is primarily rural. It is to
128 see with fresh eyes what, from our Harris mountain-top,
we viewed as a unit at the core of 'the North and West'.
After the island has been described in terms of its physical
and human geography (Part One), the endeavour (in Part
Two) will be to give a completer account than may yet
have been given of the nature of Gaelic community, with
[621] its temporal duties and its spiritual sanctions. The three
concentric circles of community are described: the family,
the farm team and boat's crew, and the larger township
groups. The relations of this threefold grouping of livelihood
and society to Chiefs and Church are studied, and
followed out in later evolution, until today. Elsewhere
I have endeavoured to show how the Island can worthily
maintain itself, and thereby find a new freedom. The final
chapter returns to the broader aspects of society and region
touched on here.

If this intensive study of a single isle and community
can throw fresh light upon certain essential characters of
the less-understood region of the British Isles—that lying
outside the south-eastern 'Plain'—it may help to contribute
121 to more than economic reorientation. The significance
of the Island life—not so much for the past, which

121 cannot be changed, as for the future which can—lies in
the intensity of its communal traditions, extinguished else-
where. Much has gone—many of the fishing crews are
[178] disbanded and team-work has weakened—but much lives
on, and much has been learned. The Gaels have still to
[184] make their full offering to English-speaking civilisation.
To do so, they must find their own fulfilment within the
framework of the Highlands of Scotland.[1]

2. *Scottish Crofts, Farms and Labour-teams: the Rural Unit Today*

184 When, in thinking of Scots countrymen, we differentiate
105 between the men of the Highlands and Isles, the Lowlands
and the Borders, what stamp of occupation, society and
economic class best characterises the three regional types?
The differences we note between them are due not only to
their place of birth and region, but to their occupational
[433] discipline and social ways. Imagine, for example, a Gael,
a Lowlander and a Borderer, all three of whom follow
the same calling—say, a trio of farmers, of shepherds or
farm servants, or of independent, full-time small-holders.
When brought together each trio would find they shared
similar interests and aims in their work, and all that follows
from it. In fact, they might have more in common than
three Gaelic-speaking men who differed from one another
in vocation, although, as Gaels, the latter group would find
a bond in culture and kinship. But a fourth type of Scot,
the crofter of the North-west townships with whom this
book is concerned, would stand out, distinctively, from
any other, whether his home were Zetland or the Hebrides.
Thus not only their home or region differentiates Scots
countrymen, but their calling or class; and their families

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[113] [1] A. Geddes and F. D. N. Spaven, *The Highlands and Isles* (1949).

184 share their characteristics. So to gain a sense of pro-
portion from the start, we must map the location of Scots
105 countrymen, their numerical importance, and their types
[128] of grouping. Let us begin with the first of these three
aspects, their regional location (Fig. 2).

[102] The base map on which the data are plotted shows the
boundaries dividing the hill masses of the Highlands and
102 Southern Uplands from true 'lowland'. This hill country
13 is mostly covered by rough pasture (left blank on the map)
311 within which lie strips of 'Isolated Arable' with other
improved land in the valleys and along the outlying coast-
lands (shown in black). This hill country includes the
Scottish Isles, with the exception of Orkney, which falls
[241] rather into the category of 'lowland'. It is largely devoted
to sheep farming and crofting, or left to grouse and deer.
[427] The lowland area from the Orkneys to the Tweed and Sol-
way is devoted to mixed and dairy farming with lowland
types of small-holding, except, of course, for 'Industrial
Regions', which include most of the urban area of Scotland.

[226] Within the 'three-mile' territorial limit from the coast
lie the inshore waters, in which local fishing was once
important, and might again become so; these are left
white on the map (Fig. 2). By contrast to their narrow
extent on the East Coast, their width is notable in the
Northern Isles and on the West Coast.

102 The problem set in making this map is to show two
13 different worlds, as it were: the Highland and the Lowland.
The two are rarely envisaged together, and much confusion
184 of thought and policy results. To master the map, the
128 reader may scrutinise first one part, the Highlands (cover-
ing the other with one hand), then the other part, the
182 Lowlands (in the same way): thus each will appear clearly
in turn. Both can then be envisaged together.

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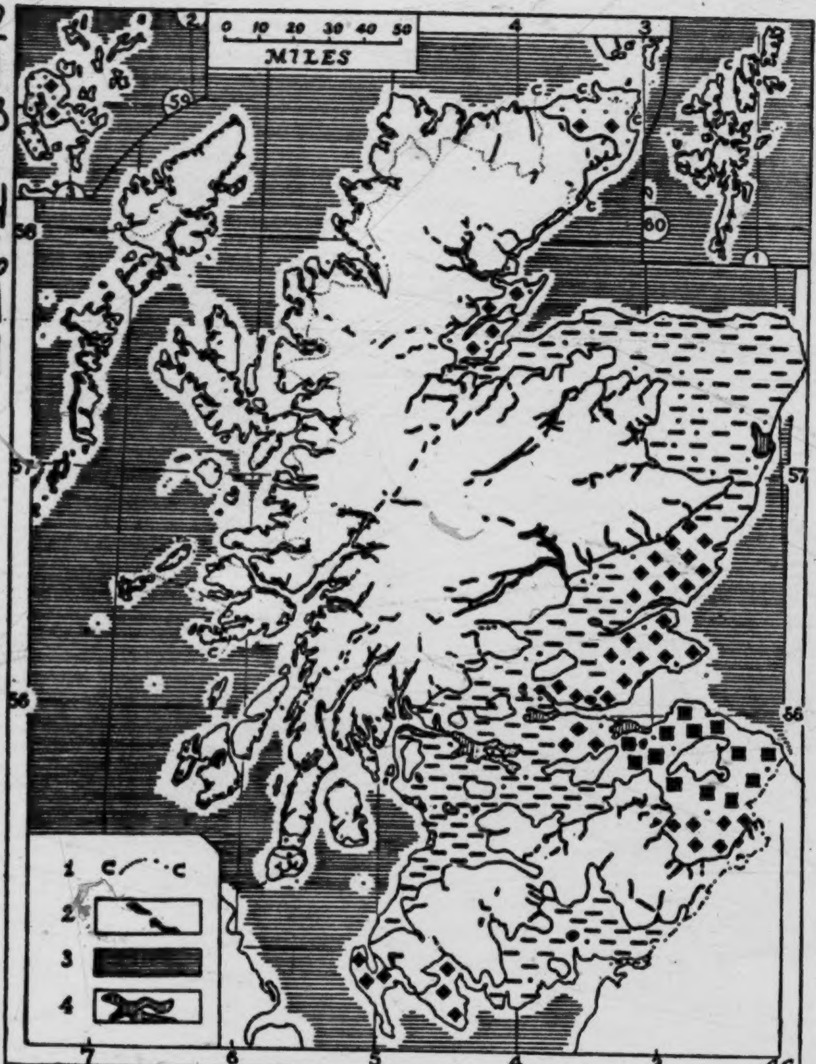
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FIG. 2.—Map to show (i) the use of land and sea in and around Scotland, with special reference to the Crofting Townships Zone of the NW. Highlands and Isles, and (ii) the average size in each county of labour-teams of farms and small-holdings in the Lowlands

CH. I ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

182 Let us begin with the economic and the social signi-
184 ficance of the Highlands and Isles with which we are
concerned. Economically the crofters' 'living space' is
311 the narrow interrupted belt of improved land (shown black)
[241] which is generally fronted by the sea and its inshore waters,
and is backed by the Crofters' Grazings (enclosed by line
[427] C on the map). Some 700 crofting townships or com-
munities are found in Zetland, the North-west mainland
[361] and the Western Isles, each with its Common Grazing;
the line C also encloses a small area devoted to other
grazings. Deer forests predominate on the eastern, main-
land, side of the line. On the remainder of the hill country
are to be found the hill-sheep farms, with other small farms
and small-holdings.

174 In the past the fishing crew at sea and the joint labour-
621 team on land formed the communal units contained within

632
Key to use of Land and Sea
423 *(Highland, Island and Urban Areas)*

241 1. **The dotted line C .... C encloses the Crofters' Grazings, mainly 'Commons'.**
226 2. **Black areas: strips of 'Isolated Arable' within the rough pastures of the Highlands and Southern Uplands (left blank).**
3. **Horizontal ruling: open sea, outside the 'three-mile' belt of 'inshore fishing' (left blank).**
102 4. **Vertical ruling: urban and industrial regions.**

131 *Key to Size of Labour-Teams of Farms and Small-Holdings*
133 *(in the Lowlands)*

[311] **The symbols show the average number of employees per team in each county.**

(1 symbol = 100 teams)

[241] **(a) Per Mixed and Dairy Farm**
- — 2·2 to 3·8 (3·1)
- ◆ 4·1 to 5·6 (4·9) [361]
- ■ 6·4 to 8·2 (7·1)

(b) Per Full-time Small Holding
- • 0·7 to 1·0 (0·85)

(The numbers in brackets are the averages for Scotland.)

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226 the township; and to each were allotted the rights of the
241 common grazing and the fishing grounds. For more than
a century the croft has been held individually, though in
423 the townships the common grazing is still held in common.
621 Beyond these 'homely' limits lie wider horizons, in the
632 past those of seafaring and of droving or the chase, and
today of fishing and gillieing at home, or of ocean journeys,
[178] urban occupations or colonisation.

In the Lowland regions each symbol represents 100
182 holdings. For (A), ^ 'mixed and dairy farming', the par-
184 ticular type of symbol shows the average number of workers
241 employed on a farm-holding in each county. On each
farm the employed workers form what may be called the
'Labour-Team'. A team may be 'small', 'medium' or
'large'. The Scottish averages of these three types (indicated in the inset key to the map) are roughly three, five and seven workers per team. Four 'casual' workers are counted as equivalent to one 'permanent' worker, but farmers' wives are excluded. Under (B), for the same Lowland counties and areas, full-time small-holdings are
[593] shown separately. The Scottish average of less than one full-time worker employed, most often a son or daughter of the small-holder, is typical of all the counties.

241 As to the relative importance of the different classes of
farms and small-holdings in Scotland, true agricultural
[162] land-holders number 68,000, of which fully one-third hold part-time holdings (like the Island crofters), one-third 'full-time farms', and rather fewer (one-fifth) hold 'full-time small-holdings'. The remainder accounts for other types of less importance. The farms predominate in terms of improved land, full-time employment, and of course of
[311] production. As to area, farms cover 80 per cent of agri-
[464] cultural land. The farmers employ nearly 90,000 workers,
[162] ^ [refer to map p. 16 .. analyst 18]

241 162 464 241 427 162 and with the addition of 10,000 workers on full-time small-holdings, these constitute a labour force of nearly 100,000. Nevertheless, there are more crofts than farms in Scotland, and more small (part-time) crofters than farmers, besides 'full-time small-holders', of whom so many are crofters, north of the Highland line. Thus the number of crofter families forms an important item of Scotland's rural population. Of these, the families of Lewis-and-Harris form fully one-fifth, owing to the remarkable growth of population until 1925. Even in the little burgh of Stornoway many families hold a plot of land, and at heart they may be almost as much 'crofters' as townsmen.

241 427 621 Socially, what is meant in the Island by the term 'crofters'? Although each Island crofter cultivates his own arable holding (his croft), he shares the common pastures with fellow-crofters, each having a right to a 'sum' of so much stock, 'his souming'. Open, sandy land by the shore, if any, may also be shared. These common grazings, shared together by the crofters of one community—a hamlet, a village or township—form a social link of great significance. They distinguish what we shall call 'township crofting' from individual holding, whether of part-time or full-time small-holdings, or of true farms. The common grazings, enclosed by line C (Fig. 2)[1], thus [361] form an important social index. About 75 per cent of the area included forms Common (or other Crofters') Grazings. The close dots of the dotted line divide the 'Commons' from Deer Forests, as in the Island and inland from the north-western coasts. Widely spaced dots divide the Commons from the Sheep Farms and other mixed holdings further south.

241 361 Outside the tract of 'township crofting' in the north and west, the chief unit of Scots rural life is the farm,

[1] [see p. 16--analyst]

241 with its tied cottages and frequently a 'bothy' for the unmarried.
361 Next to this comes the full-time small-holding,
[184] important in the North-east and the Southern Highlands
of Scotland. Great as are the differences between these
types of unit today, they go back, to a considerable extent,
[174] to common origins. The sites of the farms are ancient.
And their people, though since divided into masters and men,
are the successors to those who were once the 'kindly cooperators' of older 'farm groups', of Lowland *ferm-toun* and
[184] Gaelic *baile* (pronounced like 'ballie'). The island counterpart of these, and their life, will be described in Part Two.
Hence, before we turn to further analysis of the Highlands
and Isles, a word more should be said of Lowland types.

241 An important social index in the Lowlands of Scotland
361 is the number composing the farm labour-team, averaged
464 for each county. Villages and even hamlets are few,
[171] largely because farmers and farm servants live on the farms.
Compared to those of most of England, Scots labour-teams are small.
[184] Yet, as the map^ indicates, there is a
wide range from the 'large' teams of South-east Scotland,
through the 'medium' teams of adjacent areas, to the
'small' teams of the West and North-east. Not only do
the contacts of employer with employees partly depend
upon the number in the team, but so do the farm servants'
relations to one another. On the whole, the larger the
team, the more formal its organisation; and the smaller
[554] the team, the greater a worker's own responsibility. The
'family farmer' of the West and North-east is often an
[178] ex-farm servant. From Burns's time, his character and
enterprise have been recognised in Scotland, and in the
last forty years have become well known in South-east
England. But the isolation of these little farms brought
its problems and its hardships.

^[see map p. 16 -- analyst] 20

174 The historical aspect of these regional facts is extremely
184 significant to the evolution of Scots social life, and to
779 developments of Presbyterian worship led by Elders in
ferm-toun and Kirk; although suggested by comparisons
55 throughout this book, they have still to be seriously followed
128 out. As to the future, regrouping of our somewhat
scattered agricultural population has been strongly urged
121 in planning for post-war housing and community life.
185 But sound planning must be based on survey, long overdue;
though elementary, this key map appears to be the
first of its kind for Scotland (Fig. 2).^ It is from these units
of farm-team and township that Scots rural society must
be rebuilt, region by region.

184 One further contrast between the farming and the
241 crofting communities demands attention: it lies in the
types of migration—one is tempted to say, of semi-
361 nomadism. Crofters, though they move to and from their
166 croft and township—to the city, the sea, or the New World
—return home to their native township when they can,
and to no other. Many farm servants, on the other hand,
though they usually spend their lives in the county or
region of their birth, have been on the move from farm
to farm, year after year. What is true of Lowland Scotland
seems rather true of North-east England, but not of 'the
(464) English Plain'. Unmarried Scots farm servants were hired
for the half-year, and frequently moved after each new
hiring, the married once a year. Families were annually
uprooted—if indeed they could be said to strike root at all!
[722] The war-time 'Standstill' Order for Scotland began to
check this migratory life; but its effects remain. Hence
[178] many men have few ties, their wives still fewer. The
children could not grow up with their schoolmates: they
could look back to no "Auld Lang Syne", of which the

^[see p. 16 -- analyst]

184 verses would ring false to them! Before 1939, two-fifths
241 of the rural pupils of most non-crofting counties came or
361 went in the school year—most of them the children of
farm servants. Their schooling suffered, and their
166 teachers might be reduced to despair; indeed it is to
[182] educationists, rather than to agriculturists, that we owe a
survey of these facts. When they leave home to be 'hired',
[871] the young folk learn to fend for themselves but may suffer
in the learning: stability of character and endurance in
[155] attachment are hard to form.

It would be difficult to overstress the tragedy of the
long-continued break-up of rural communities in the Low-
175 lands. From the later years of the English invasions, as
when Major wrote with his knowledge of Scotland in 1500,
178 this break-up continued through the early, largely unre-
241 corded phases of the agricultural revolution, down to the
361 later phases from 1750 or 1800 to the present day. No
one who has worked with fellow-servants on Scots farms
166 will under-estimate their sterling qualities. But the break-
155 up, the tragedy, happened. It was boldly sketched by the
Rt. Hon. Thomas Johnston (to 1929) and verified by
[114] Miss I. F. Grant (1924 onward). Beginning from intimate
study of well recorded and surviving ways in the Highlands
and the Hebrides, Miss Grant realised the significance of
earlier Lowland life in the farm-hamlet or ferm-toun, as
Lowlanders themselves could hardly have done. Comprehension of this break-up of community brings out the
value of the enduring elements of communal life still
recorded, remembered and surviving in the 'Outermost'
Hebrides, at the core of 'the North and West'.[1]

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[1] Ideas outlined in this section are developed in A. Geddes (1938–54). Detailed references will be found in the Bibliography.

3. *The Significance of Lewis-and-Harris*

181 The Highlands and Western Isles today, "The Land
184 of the Gael", may thus be grouped as two regions. The
361 North-west is mainly of 'township crofting' and distant
from the Lowlands—the other mainly of farming, living
101 nearer to the Lowlands and in touch with them. Through-
[197] out the North-west, Gaelic is still the common speech,
even of the children. The old community feeling is
[178] strong; it is that, indeed, which keeps the people attached
to the villages.

101 From the plains and cities of the South it is a far cry
to *Ultima Thule*, as Lewis, like Zetland, is sometimes called
131 even by its own people. Lying some twenty-five to thirty
miles across the Minch from the mainland, its nearest links
[496] with the South lie even farther away. From Stornoway
it is some seventy-five miles to Kyle of Lochalsh, the rail-
head for Inverness and North-east Scotland, and 100 miles
to Mallaig, the railhead for Fort William and Glasgow.
To reach Stornoway over the moors from the west coast
[504] townships is itself a journey. Stornoway is the Island's
only port, though passengers are put off at Tarbert, at
[177] Stockinish and at Rodel in Harris. Isolation has always
been a dominant factor in the Island's life. From pre-
[178] history through the Middle Ages to modern times, that
factor played its changing part.

178 In Lewis, conditions had changed less than elsewhere
during the last century; for example, the *New Statistical
Account* of South-west Argyll in 1830-35 reads like a
description of conditions in Lewis as they were until after
1914! Hence, as already said, the contrasts are very great
indeed in the aspect of the country, its fields and houses,
and in the number, character and ways of the people. It

178 follows that as the descendants of the crofters of the South-
west and East Highlands could and did change their ways
within the space of a lifetime, so those of the North-west
114 Highlands and the Isles can change too. Given the co-
178 operative leadership which is arising in the twentieth
century and was totally lacking in the ideals and training
185 typical of the nineteenth, that change may be not only for
the better in the development of 'individual' qualities,
such as the power to do hard work for 'success'; change
may also maintain and develop what still remains of the
old characteristics which gave the community life of
the Gael, with all its faults, elements of beauty and
sanctity.

In an article on "The Human Geography of Lewis",
A. Stevens (1925) described the Island and people. His
comparison of the cold, wet 'desert' of Lewis and its
corn-patch 'oases' with the desert of heat and drought
[182] and its oases of palms, is ingenious and suggestive. One
might follow up the analogy and compare irrigation to the
[241] drainage of moorland and its fertilisation, which form the
means of reclamation at home, and draw parallels between
their immediate results on the land and the ultimate effects
on work and social life.

174 Until the agricultural revolution, the unwritten story
241 of Scotland was in great part that of a long, uneven struggle
to make sour soils fit for cultivation and productive of a
134 livelihood. Most of all is this true for North-west Scot-
178 land; moreover, there, for eighty years past, the struggle
has been a losing one, in the sense that arable land has been
241 decreasing and rough pasture deteriorating. In spite of
subsidies, the 'marginal farms' of Scotland have a tough
134 fight. Yet lands from Scandinavia to Finland and North
178 Germany are giving a lead in peat-reclamation, where
[654]

134 Scotland had begun to lag since her pioneering effort from 1750 to 1880.

178 Fortunately, Scotland is now recognising that in peat [654] reclamation, on the one hand, and the improvement of rough grazing, or at least its maintenance, on the other, [185] there lies a problem of national importance. More than half the land surface of the country consists of mountain 311 and heath land used for grazing, not including 'deer forests' from which sheep had been altogether excluded. The arable land of Scotland is less than one-sixth of the whole, with about one-twelfth in addition under permanent grass. Moreover, since most of the enclosed land is distant from the area of rough grazing, the latter is partly wasted. The difficulties of soil and sea and of the whole economic situation are great, and must be understood.

(B) THE ISLAND LANDSCAPE, LAND-FORMS AND GEOLOGY

1. *Aspects of the Isle*

131 Lewis-and-Harris, the most northerly isle of the Outer Hebrides, and the largest, is roughly lozenge-shaped. Although only thirty miles in width, it is over sixty miles in length. Attached to Harris parish is the little isle of [103] Berneray, half a dozen miles farther south. It puzzles the stranger that, while the archipelago of the Outer [823] Hebrides is best known to the inhabitants as "The Long Island", Lewis (or the Lews) and Harris, which actually form one island, are spoken of as separate islands.[1] Yet nothing could be more natural. Before the making of

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[113] [1] "The Long Island", Gaelic *An Eilean Fada*, as a name for the Outer Hebrides has the sanction of traditional usage, as Alexander Carmichael noted in his Introduction to *Carmina Gadelica* (vol. i, 1900; and 1928).

Before the making of
131 roads, it was ease of sailing which united island peoples
174 and their territories. One can wade or drive, at low tide,
[491] over the fords that unite the Isle of Benbecula with the
two Uists, North and South : in fact, a bridge now connects
[505] Benbecula with South Uist. But only the roughest of
[491] hill tracks led through the hills of North Harris from the
'Tarbert' or Isthmus of Harris to the nearest habitation
at the head of Loch Seaforth or Loch Erisort, in the Lews.
This is a distance of some twenty miles, or a fair day's
tramp for an unloaded man, and far too much for a return
[823] journey in one day. Hence separation of territory and
name was natural. This separation no longer exists as
131 there is now a good 'bus service from Rodel via Tarbert
178 to Stornoway which links Harris with the daily Kyle to
823 Stornoway steamer. In this book, the Island, or the
494 Islanders, refers to Lewis-and-Harris with its people,
as one.

101 Lewis is included in Ross-shire (of which the county
town is Dingwall, north of Inverness) and Harris in
131 Inverness-shire, together with the rest of the 'Long
634 Island'. The county boundary cuts across the six-mile
isthmus north of the hills of North Harris, from the
in-reaching Loch Seaforth WNW. to Loch Resort
(Fig. 8). All the Outer Hebrides are now included in the
Parliamentary constituency of the Western Isles. Proposals to unite the Island under one District Council, or
the Outer Hebrides under one County Council, are more
favourably viewed in Stornoway than in Harris or the
632 Southern Isles. Harris forms one civil parish, while Lewis
is divided into four: Stornoway, Barvas, Uig and Lochs.
[133] The Lewis parish boundaries traversing the moors are inset
[131] in Fig. 8 so that their trends can be readily grasped, and
the inhabited portions of the parishes quickly located (p. 50).

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/facing p. 27/

Photograph by R.A.F.; reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office

PLATE II. AIR VIEW OVER STORNOWAY BAY, LOOKING NORTH

The Point, with the inner harbour behind, is the nucleus of the burgh; nineteenth-century extension filled up the ground inland. Lews Castle is on the left

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(1) Stornoway stretches from the town north to Tolsta;
(2) Barvas from the north of the Island southwards, past Barvas village (WNW. of Stornoway) five miles further to Bragar;
(3) Uig covers the rest of the south-west coast; and
(4) Lochs, the remainder of the south-east coast.

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Seen from the sea, the Island chiefly presents dark, gneissic, heath-fringed cliffs whose steep walls become gentle slopes towards the south as we enter the bays, sea lochs and firths which run far inland (Plates I to IV). As one sails northward along the east coast of Lewis, there are few hills to be seen, and these are below 1000 feet; most of the island is rolling moor, rarely rising above 300 feet. Here and there new houses stand out, the 'white houses' (*tighean geala*), which, however, are usually grey 342 or even dark in colour. These dwellings have generally been stone-built and were often slate-roofed; asbestos roofs are now common. Yet even when dark, these new cottages are conspicuous beside the low 'black houses' with their rounded forms of wall and roof, and with thatch overspread by a faint haze of blue peat reek, like the bloom 133 upon a fruit. Their plots of corn, though each may be so [243] tiny as to appear but a spot at a distance, together form a bright patch against the dark brown moor. In the sketch which forms the Key to the Map of Vegetation and Settlements (Fig. 8), an attempt has been made to bring the map and the landscape alive to the mind's eye, from the hills of North Harris north-eastward to the Butt of Lewis.

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Turning the north cape of Lewis, 'the Butt', and sailing southwards along the west coast, we see hills increasing in height in the Uig district, rising to those of Harris with

131 summits of up to 2622 feet. South of this chain of hills
133 the ground drops again on a peninsula some twelve miles
long and only seven miles wide. This forms the more
populous part of Harris with its ' sandy shore ', the Machar,
facing the Atlantic, and its rocky bays and fishing hamlets
[134] on the Minch.[1] Lewis has its ' machars ' too, areas of
white shell sand, which is so light that it blows up the
[504] hillsides, thus improving the pasture-land; but there is
little ' machar ' on the eastern coast, save for the south-western shores of the great sandy North or Broad Bay,
enclosed by the peninsula of I, or Eye, which also acts as
the outer breakwater for the harbour of Stornoway.

131 Landing at Stornoway and leaving behind us the pines,
133 and the wind-pruned sycamore woods around Lews
Castle, we find ourselves among the small fields of the
361 villages which are partly suburban to Stornoway. Inland
[137] stretch the gently rolling, brown and somewhat melancholy
moors that cover so much of the Lews. From the Butt
of Lewis to the beginning of the Harris hills one could
make a bee-line SSW., midway through the Island for over
thirty miles, without passing a house or a strip of corn, and
seeing only a tiny, ramshackle hut, a shieling (or *àirigh*),
used for six weeks in the year when the cattle are taken to
the summer pasture. All the villages are in sight of the
sea, and generally close to it, with only one inland exception, Achmore, south-west of Stornoway, founded after
1850. The hills of Harris are not less lonely than the
moors of the Lews.

18 Diversity is one of the fascinations of such an island
131 as this. Although, like the founders of Stornoway, all

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[1] *Am machair* (' ch ' as in ' loch ', also anglicised as ' macher '), n.f. the plain, smooth beach-land or links. A sandy beach or ebb-strand, *tràigh*, n.f., backed by *machair*, contrasts with a pebbly beach, *cladach*, n.m., backed by rougher beach-land, as in the Cladach district of W. Lewis.

18 these communities of ' fisher-crofters ' settled at the meet-
131 ing of sea and land, yet differences of topography and
133 situation are still accompanied by differences of emphasis
in their dual way of life. Although insularity might lead
one to presuppose homogeneity, actually the seaways by
which an island may be reached may bring groups of
different race to land at different spots, each spot appro-
priate to their way of life. Differing social economics may
develop there, and differences of race may be maintained;
divergences are found along with the convergence due to
the elements common to the whole island and to its
[178] history. From prehistory to the coming of Leverhulme
we shall find this crossing of influences in the Island
microcosm, the Island drama.

2. *Structure and Rock-types of the Western Highlands and Isles*

133 In Fig. 3 are sketched those features of structure and rock-type which have guided the work of ages of erosion, influencing both the ' plan ' and coastlines of Western Scotland and the surfaces and scenery of the land. In their turn, both surface and mineral composition have influenced the life of plants and animals. This sketch map should be compared to an atlas map of relief, settlements and routes. This less familiar aspect has been selected both because rock-type is a factor in the causation of land-forms and soils, and because rock structure is basic to the forms and coasts of the mainland and the Isles.

[131] The parallelism of the main trends on either side of the Minch is seen in the structural boundaries of its coasts, which are of Archaean rock or Archaean foundation (A on Fig. 3), as are Coll and Tiree, and South-west Islay.

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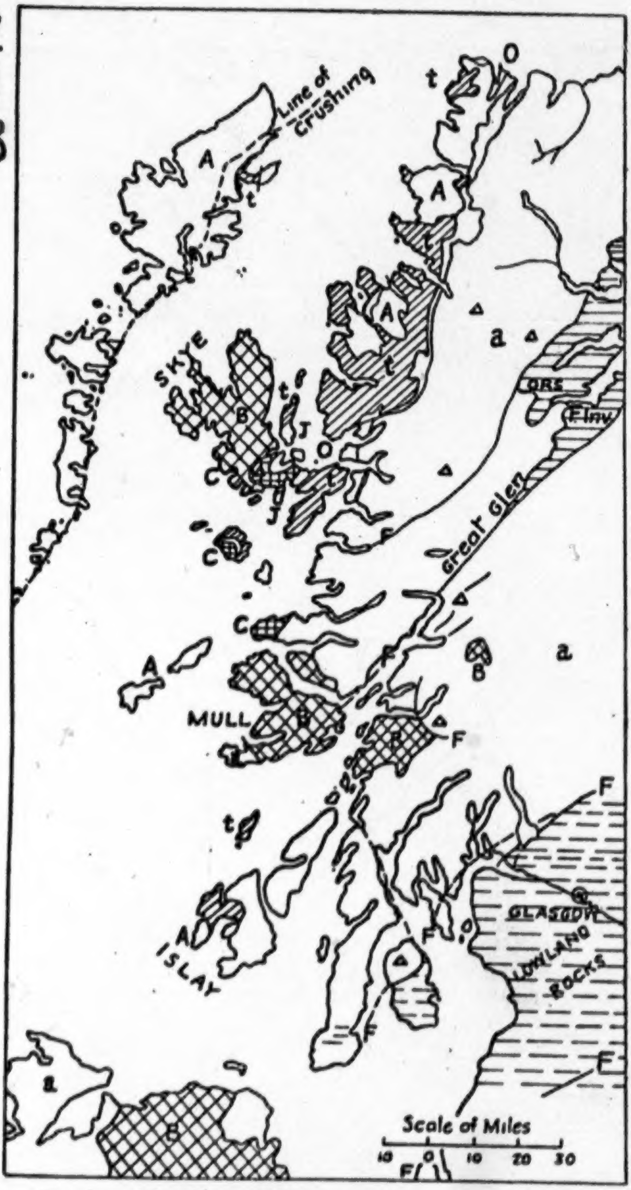
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FIG. 3.—Sketch map of selected features of structure and rock-types of NW. Scotland

133 Except for this fringe, the prevailing rocks of the Highlands include acid rocks: the Moine Schists, the 'Dalradian rocks' of the South-west, and the granite masses such as the Cairngorms. Plateau surfaces and benches, worn, uplifted and stepped at various heights, were veined by torrent and river, cutting narrow valleys; and later these river valleys were gouged and widened by glacier and ice-sheet to become steep-sided glens and wide-floored straths.
[131] Between the main, parallel coastal trends, Skye stands out as a great extrusive mass of lavas—not acid but basic in composition, almost 'bridging' the Minch and the Sea of the Hebrides.

Forces of stress, strain and shear are betrayed by 'lines of crushing' in the Outer Hebrides, and of faulting (FF) on the mainland. Most notable of these fault lines are those of the Great Glen and of the 'Great Boundary Fault' that divides the Highland from the Lowland rocks, extending from Arran and the Lower Clyde north-eastwards. Still other trends are revealed by the lines of sea-loch and river, lying not only SW.-NE. but W.-E. and also NW.-SE. These lines linked the greater inhabited coastlands, loch-sides and straths of the Moray Basin to the North-
[131] west. Finally, a line of overthrust, from near Cape Wrath

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Key to Fig. 3 (opposite)

A	**Archaean Gneiss and Granite Gneiss, etc. (Lewisian)**	**F**	**Principal Faults**
		J	**Jurassic Ironstones in and near Skye**
a	**Highland Schists (including Moine and Dalradian Granites, etc.)**	**O**	**Overthrust, Cambrian with some Limestones**
		ORS	**Old Red Sandstone**
		t	**Torridonian Sandstones, etc.**
B	**Plateaus of Basic Lavas**		
C	**Igneous Complexes**	**Δ**	**Dominant peaks**

Note. **The map shows selected features relevant to the structure of the Hebrides and the north and north-west of the British Isles, and the rock-types influencing scenery and surface, vegetation and agriculture.**

southwards to Skye, bounds the Archaean gneiss and the stratified Torridonian sandstones of the North-west.

Given the possibility of 'continental drift', Scotland's NW. crustal block may have 'drifted' along the line of the Great Glen south-south-westwards for a distance of some sixty miles, relatively to the rest of the Highland mass. The primary evidence leading to this suggestion is the identification of the Foyers and Strontian Granites, situated on opposite sides of the Great Glen some sixty miles apart, as mechanically displaced portions of one original mass. Such horizontal movement may be related to the great Hercynian mountain-building movements of Carboniferous times so marked in south-east England.[1] This movement would have formed a major factor in leading to the development of the present structure and rock-types, plan and land-forms of the NW. coast and the Hebrides, Inner and Outer.

3. *Structure and Rock-types of the Island*

The axis of the Island lies NNE. to SSW. It consists of an ancient rock mass, the 'block' character of which is revealed by the geometrical mosaic of the coastlines and lochs. In simple terms, the fault lines are comparable to the long, fairly straight cracks to be found in any hard block of even consistency, split under stresses and strains. These systems of faults lie in at least two main directions. The main, axial trend is followed by South Harris and by much of the east coast. Each trend seems to have other faults lying at an angle to it, though not necessarily at right angles. Hence we find more than four main trends for the lines of coasts, lochs, rivers, bounding the hill blocks. These must be due to somewhat different stresses and strains at succeeding periods. Comparison should be made with Fig. 4, (*a*) and (*b*).

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[1] W. Q. Kennedy, *Q. J. Geol. Soc.*, vol. cii, part i, 1946 (p. 41).

Like a jointed claw, there is attached to the main island the double peninsula of Stornoway and of Eye: *I* in Gaelic, or 'Point District' in English. This double peninsula is of different structure and rock-type to the rest. Eye or Point District itself might be an island but for the wash of shingle and sands which—caught no doubt in the eddy caused by southerly gales and by the tides—have covered the bottom of Broad or North Bay and formed the spit of sand or isthmus that links Eye to the inner peninsula of Stornoway.

Most of the area is occupied by crystalline rocks belonging to the oldest known division of British rocks, the Archaean or the 'Lewisian Gneiss'. This gneiss, however, represents a great complex including rocks of widely different periods. In South Harris it includes altered limestones, locally improving the derived soils. Of notable interest as a clue to structure is the zone of crushed gneisses bordering the Minch.

In the south-west of Eye Peninsula, and round Stornoway, there occur remains of a sedimentary formation, younger than the Lewisian Gneiss. These Stornoway beds have had a dual effect on settlement. First of all, their existence and formation have allowed of deep indentation, giving a good harbour with an isthmus not far off. Stornoway harbour itself is due to the erosion of these rocks about intrusions or dykes of more resistant crinanite. Secondly, the better nature of the soil derived from these weathered sandstones and conglomerates has aided reclamation and cultivation.

Comparison of the geology with the relief (Fig. 4, (*a*) and (*b*)) will show certain local correspondences of high relief with resistant rock, such as the granite-gneiss at its

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

3: Geddes K-4, 5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

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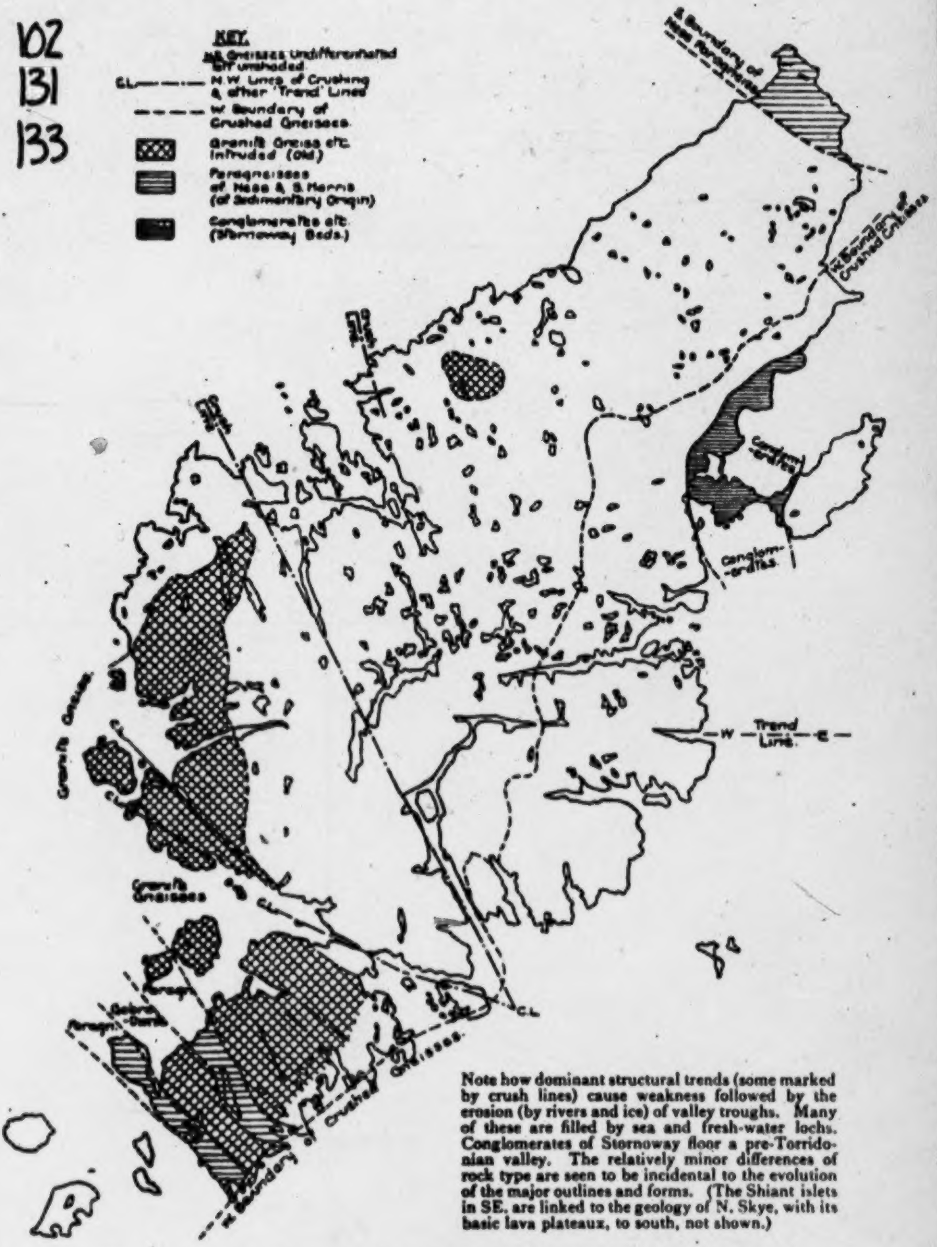
KEY.
All Gneisses Undifferentiated left unshaded
C.L. N.W. Lines of Crushing & other 'Trend' Lines
W. Boundary of Crushed Gneisses
Granite Gneiss etc. Intruded (Old)
Paragneisses of Ness & S. Harris (of Sedimentary Origin)
Conglomerates etc. (Stornoway Beds.)
Boundary of Ness Paragneisses
W. Boundary of Crushed Gneisses
Conglomerates
Conglom-erates
W Trend Line E
Granite Gneiss
Granite Gneisses
Paragn.
Gabbro-Dior.
C.L.
W. Boundary of Crushed Gneisses

Note how dominant structural trends (some marked by crush lines) cause weakness followed by the erosion (by rivers and ice) of valley troughs. Many of these are filled by sea and fresh-water lochs. Conglomerates of Stornoway floor a pre-Torridonian valley. The relatively minor differences of rock type are seen to be incidental to the evolution of the major outlines and forms. (The Shiant islets in SE. are linked to the geology of N. Skye, with its basic lava plateaux, to south, not shown.)

FIG. 4 (*a*).—Lewis-and-Harris: Geology (after Jehu and Craig)

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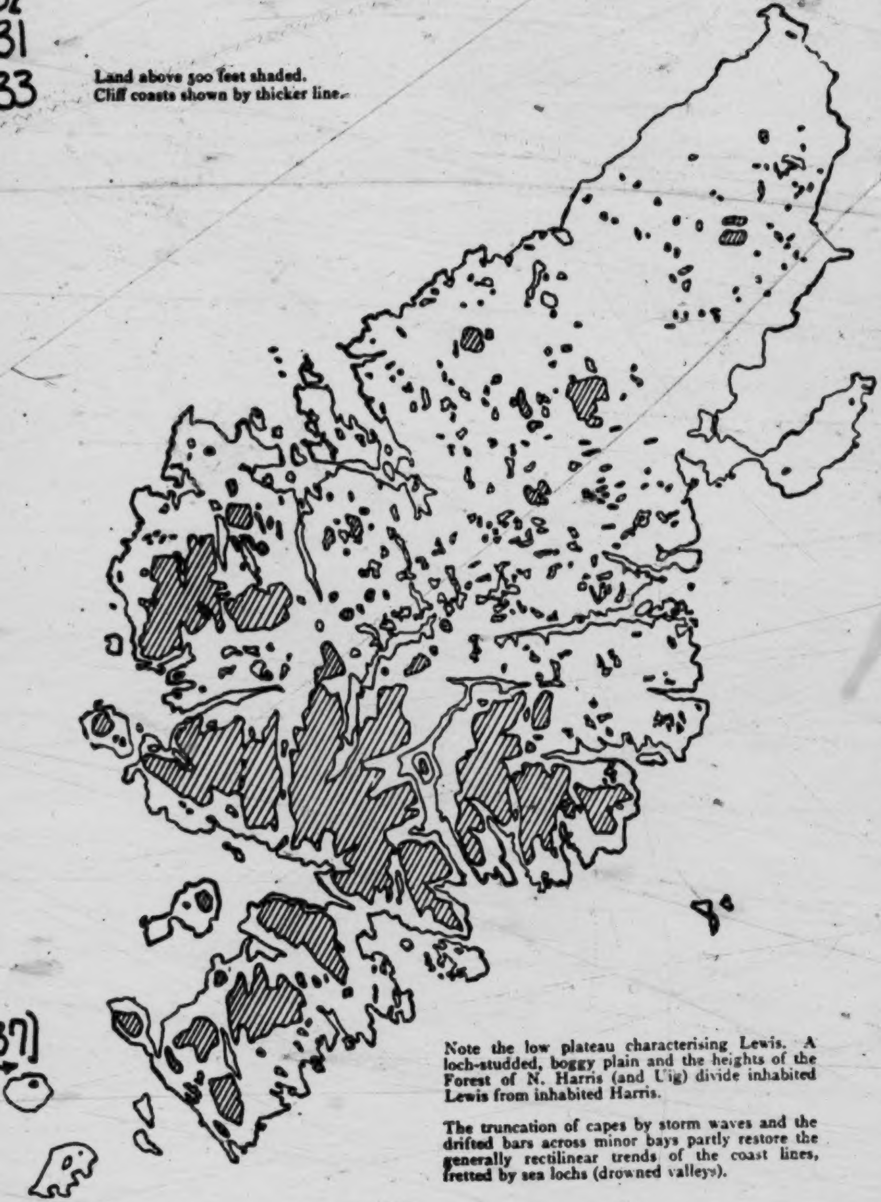

Land above 500 feet shaded.
Cliff coasts shown by thicker line.

[137]

Note the low plateau characterising Lewis. A loch-studded, boggy plain and the heights of the Forest of N. Harris (and Uig) divide inhabited Lewis from inhabited Harris.

The truncation of capes by storm waves and the drifted bars across minor bays partly restore the generally rectilinear trends of the coast lines, fretted by sea lochs (drowned valleys).

FIG. 4 (*b*).—Lewis-and-Harris: Relief

133 most northerly outlier, yet, in the main, one is struck not by the variety of rocks (except for the 'Stornoway Beds') but by their homogeneity. It is structure, causing the uplift of certain masses relatively to others, more than differences in rock-type, which has guided the work of erosion, in sculpturing both the Island's plan and the details of its forms. Submergence of the land has fretted the coastline into a zigzag line of ridge-capes alternating with valley-mouths flooded or 'drowned' by the sea, as inlet and loch.

316 Historically the gneisses were of little value. The fact
[174] that they tend to split still helps the Islander in building,
as it helped his ancestors when they raised the great stone
[172] circles at Callanish on East Loch Roag. Except where
they are very basic (non-acid) in composition, they make
[135] poor road metal. Yet the gneisses are not quite devoid
of economic minerals, which include masses of pegmatite,
and the only large body of anorthosite or lime-feldspar
rock in Britain, conceivably a source of alumina for glass
[439] manufacture.[1] Two feldspar quarries opened at Lingarbay
and Northton in South Harris in 1941 employed sixty men
during the war, the mineral being despatched from Leverburgh
for use in the Staffordshire Potteries in the manu-
[178] facture of porcelain insulators. The higher grade mineral
in Scandinavia and the better transport facilities there led
to closing the quarries, with little hope of their reopening.[2]

4. *Land-forms and Sea Floor*

133 To the faulted structure is due not only the Island plan, but the highland in middle and south, uplifted rela-

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[113]

[1] C. F. Davidson, "The Archaean Rocks of the Rodel District", *Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin.*, vol. 61, 1943, pp. 71-112.

[2] J. B. Caird, "The Isle of Harris", *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, vol. 67, 2, 1951, p. 92.

133 tively to the rolling upland in the north. Ages of 'normal' denudation by running water must have worn away most of what later rocks may have overlain the gneiss, smoothing the Island's forms. Glaciation, however, played the latest part in this process, roughly planing its lower surface as it flowed out to the open sea, or widening the stream-veined valleys and gouging out the corries which make the craggy beauty of the Deer Forest of Harris.

A characteristic of many of the lower hills of South Lewis and of Harris is the greater steepness of their slopes to west than to east (or south-east) and the drift material heaped there. Scenically, this lends a feeling of rhythm to the skyline when viewed from north or south, as of westward moving waves. It was the ice-sheet, working upon structure and pre-existing form, which steepened the western slopes 'to lee' of its westward flow, by its 'plucking' action.

133 137 [182] The chief and most important characteristic of the major surface of the Island is its rolling, hummocky topography, so different from that of a river-sculptured land. Negative as is its influence upon the life of plant communities, animals and men, its importance can hardly be exaggerated. Whereas river and stream drain a land, as they etch their way into its surface, and their deposits are laid down in gentle, regular slopes, glacier and [134] ice-sheet leave an irregular, ill-drained surface. Upon this surface, waterlogging takes place, the life of plants and soil bacteria is slowed down, and so peat accumulates, rather than the humus which might enrich the soil in a similar temperate climate upon better drained slopes. Not only the climate of the present, but of the past, hinders the processes of plant life, and all that these can mean to man.

133 Except for the sandy bays hidden beyond the headlands, or the long machar of west South Harris, the coast of the Island at high tide rises straight from the undermining breakers, rugged and uncompromising. A series of sandy 'storm-beaches' links the lower promontories, but the series of raised beaches found on the mainland and the inner isles seem absent round the Island. Along the western mainland and the Inner Hebrides, a secret harmony links the lines of the sea with those of the land, even on their wildest coasts of gneiss. Above the level plane of the sea, the shores of the mainland rise in rhythmic curves, tier above tier, some 10, 25, 50 and 100 feet, above the present line of waves and the triple band of colour which marks the shore at ebb-tide, formed of golden tangle, grey barnacles and pitch-black rock. These tiers are the 'raised beaches' of a coast which has emerged, by stages, to some 100 feet above the sea.

Lacking the raised beaches of an emerged coast, the Outer Hebrides show no clean-cut terraces like those of the mainland, inviting little communities to lay out their
[241] homesteads in an orderly way. For this reason, the older, unplanned crofts spot the landscape in an irregular way
[361] which is sometimes picturesque, yet often almost uncouth.
[134] The raised beaches have given the Gaels living east of the Minch a few precious acres of passable ploughland which would otherwise be lacking. In the Outer Isles compensation is found on the smooth machars of shell sand. These machars lie mostly on the stormy Atlantic shore, so that the more cultivable fringes of the Outer Hebrides turn their back to the mainland—except round Stornoway, a reason for their isolation.

In detail, the coasts may be grouped in three types: (1) sloping to the sea, by the sides of sheltered lochs;

133 (2) cliff-cut, where exposed stretches have been undermined by the Atlantic storms; and (3) sandy, where bays like Broad Bay have been filled in, or where shingle bars have enclosed a sheet of fresh water, as on the west coast (north-west of Stornoway) from Barvas southward to Dalebeg. The types of coast are illustrated by Plates II to V.

As to the sea floor—so important to fish-life and to navigation—the west coast of the Outer Hebrides borders a well-featured continental platform, which is higher in the north and south but lower in the middle. The irregularities suggest a former land-surface dissected by rivers with mature drainage systems.[1] The contours are revealing, as shown in the coloured map at the end, at intervals of 10 fathoms (60 feet). The sandy machar beaches of western South Harris, visible at low tide, form part of a wide, shallow shelf extending for a dozen miles off west South Harris to a depth of no more than 20 fathoms, and thence southwards along the machars of Uist to Barra; but the coast falls away steeply round most of Lewis and along the rocky east coast of 'the Long Island'.

5. *Glacial Drift or Boulder Clays, and Shell Sand*

Underlying the peat is the drift, which is spread over
133 all but the rockiest parts of the island. This is not only
314 exposed at every roadside cutting but is laid bare in wide areas around the villages. Here peat-cutting during the centuries has removed the peat, layer after layer, to the
[356] topmost turf, left aside after cutting until the last. When
[134] even this turf is removed for annual thatching, the bare

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[113] [1] S. Ting, B.Sc. (China). *Geografiska Annaler*, Band 19, 1937, pp. 62-83.

133 clay is exposed, leaving what is vividly called 'skinned'
314 land. And where drift is exposed, the mineral constituents
134 are leached out, and a hard 'moor pan' is left a few inches
[356] below the surface.

Seen from the edge of the crofts, the typical 'skinned
134 lands' of bare, blue or brownish clay, littered with stones,
137 suggest a desert. Often, only a few blades of grass or tufts
of heather grow on them. Indeed, 'skinned land' seems
at first too mild a term, for on it the stones—thickest on
top when undisturbed, and bleached by the acids of the
peat that overlay them—suggest the prophet's 'field of
bones'. One can only ask, is the rest of his vision ever
to be fulfilled and life to spring again? In some hilly parts
to south and west, not only the 'skin', the topmost layer
of peat, but the very soil, the flesh as it were, is still being
[166] stripped bare to the bone, the actual rock. The evacuation
of the islet of Bernera Beag (Uig) was largely due to this
stripping. In the more level parts to the north, however,
roadside pits show sections of clay with few stones, covered
with perhaps six inches of clay with many stones. It is
this top layer which gives the skinned land such a hopelessly
stony appearance, and shows that reclamation is less
miraculous than it seems.

134 With the coming of carts and lorries the increasing use
242 of shell sand has become possible, whether for spreading
on the land or for slipping into pockets, together with
[178] fertilisers, for potato seed. As to soils, shell sand and
boulder clay possess complementary qualities in texture
[493] and chemical composition. The shell sand of the machars
provided an early home for man, the light soil allowing
rye, a poor variety of oats, and herbage, to ripen early
and mature in late, wet seasons when the clays are sodden
with rain. Yet the sand itself is so light that drought is

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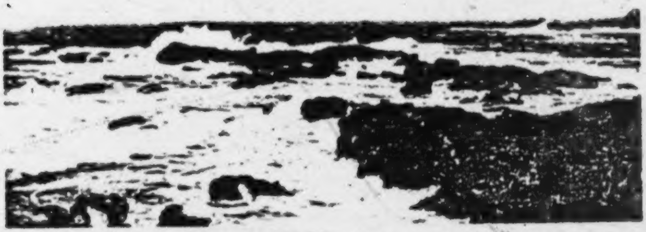

PLATE IIIA. ROCKY, SEA-ABRADED PLATFORM OFF THE BUTT OF LEWIS

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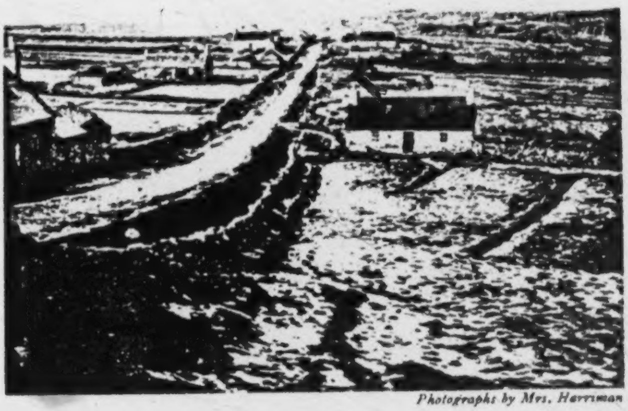

Photographs by Mrs. Harriman

PLATE IIIB. LAXDALE TOWNSHIP, ON THE FLATS NEAR BROAD BAY

'Black houses' and 'white houses' can be seen. The fields have been modernized for ploughing

/p. 40-A/

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Photograph by R. MacIver

PLATE IVA. DALBEG, WEST LEWIS

Shingle-barred bay and wave-cut cliff. In the distance is Ben Bragor (852 ft.)

Photograph by Stevens

PLATE IVB. LOCH ROAG FROM NEAR CARLOWAY

View south-west across the loch to show the sloping sides of sheltered lochs, with wave-cut cliffs of promontories. In the foreground are gneiss rocks

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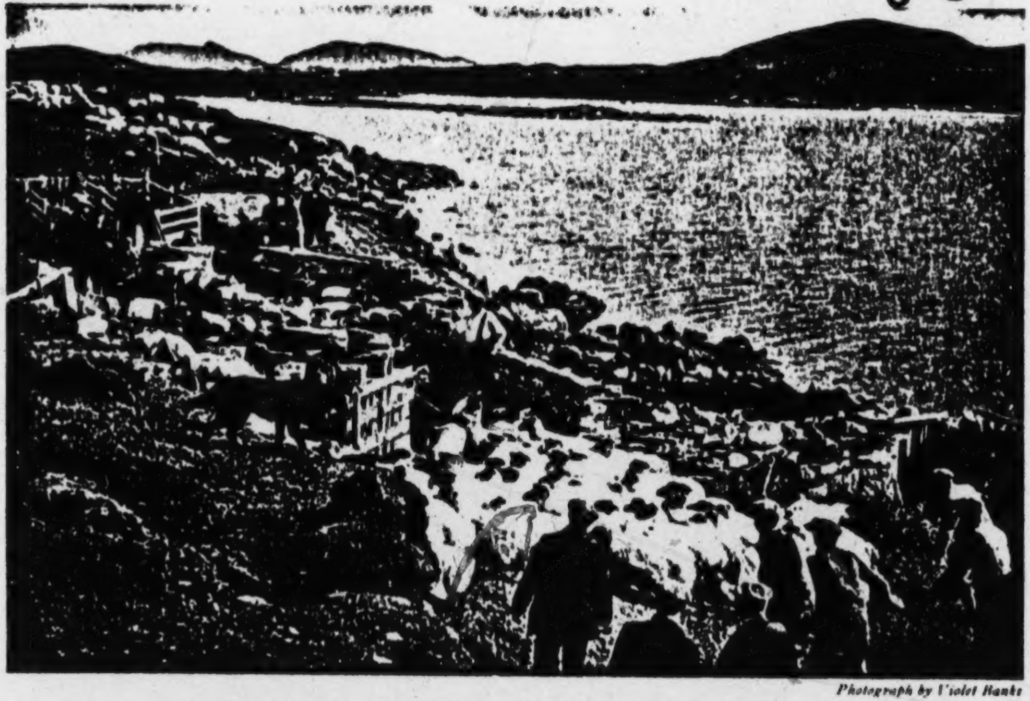

Photograph by Violet Banks

PLATE V. CROFTERS DIPPING BLACKFACE SHEEP

Across the Sound of Harris, Sollas, North Uist. The sheep have been gathered in from the ' common '

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/facing p. 41/

PLATE VIA. A YOUNG WOMAN, IN HARRIS

Photographs by J. Allan Cash

PLATE VIB. AN OLD CROFTER OF EOROPIE, BUTT OF LEWIS
Racially, a broadhead

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a danger, and an unseasonable gale may blow away the furrow and ridge with the seed. As a partial remedy, seaweed and turf are mixed with it. On the whole, landforms and soils, and the climate of the past which helped to make them, are factors of difficulty for plant and man.

CHAPTER II

THE SEASONS, PLANT LIFE AND THE CROFTERS' YEAR

(A) CLIMATE, WEATHER AND ANNUAL RHYTHM

132 THE Island climate is ' mild ' or ' cool temperate ', without strong contrasts of heat and cold in summer and winter, but subject to much wind.[1] Fig. 5 shows how, from October till May, the mean monthly temperatures lie between 40° and 50° F.; and only in July and August do they rise to 55° F. This ' lag ' in temperatures tends to make the crops late and brings oats to harvest in September, which has the same mean monthly temperature (51° F.) as June, but nearly twice its rainfall (4 ins.). The total sunshine hours for August average only 130, compared with nearly 150 for July, so that late hay is slow to dry (Fig. 6). These averages characterise the more inhabited areas; among the hills of North Harris rainfall is higher.

Cloudiness is characteristic, the total of bright sunshine being only 30 per cent of the possible even at Stornoway. The annual rainfall of Stornoway is 50 ins. per annum; that at the Butt, recorded as 40 ins., must be rather more than this, as a rain gauge on so windy a site may fail to catch rain driven horizontally in a gale. The rainfall

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{131} [1] The latitude of the Island is approximately 57° 40′ to 58° 40′ N., and the longitude 6° to 7° W.

maximum occurs in the winter months and the minimum in spring; the spring sunshine would encourage the

TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION

Monthly averages for Lewis (Stornoway)

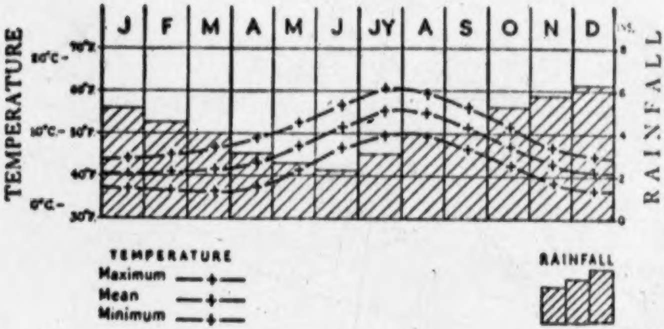

FIG. 5

SUNSHINE AND WIND SPEED

Monthly averages for Lewis

Sunshine (Stornoway) : Wind Speed (Butt of Lewis)

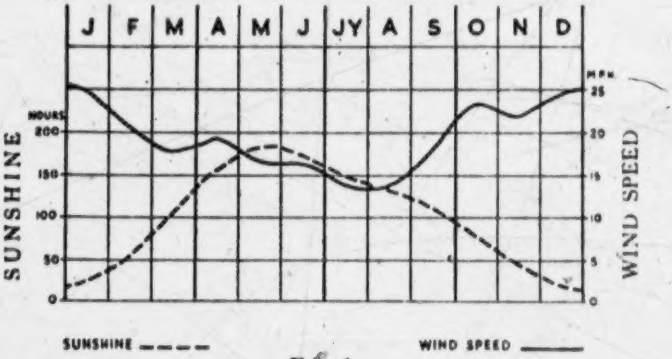

FIG. 6

growth of the crops, were it not for the lag in temperature and the fact that the chill easterly and north-easterly winds check growth.

821 Two sayings sum up the lag of the seasons in the West
824 and its effect on crops. The first runs, " Winter comes
not till after New Year, nor Spring till after St. Patrick's
241 Day " (*Cha tig Geamhradh gu cul Calluinn, no Earrach gu*
[538] *cul Fheill Paruig*). St. Patrick's Day is the 17th of March,
but old-style reckoning put both dates later still. The
[538] other runs, " A [illegible]osty winter, a misty spring, a chequered
summer, and a bright, sunny autumn, never left dearth in
Scotland " (*Geamhradh reodhtanach, Earrach ceothanach, Samhradh breac riabhach, us Foghar geal grianach, cha d'fhag gort riamh an Alba*). The retort is that though western summers may often be chequered with sun and showers well suited for growing grass and grain, the autumns are not really sunny, but rainy. Hence ' dearth ' —of grain—must result from spoiled harvests. Not so for grass, unharmed by a wet autumn. Hay, if ensilage is not possible, can usually be gathered unharmed in sunny spells
[132] of summer if cut in good time. Agriculturally, the climate
favours ' grass ' rather than grain.

132 Plentiful rainfall and coolness throughout the year do
137 not allow of complete neutral decomposition of vegetable
[134] matter in the presence of air. Hence, year by year, a
residuum of acid humus accumulates as peat on the ill-drained surface. Prehistorically, more favourable phases of climate permitted the growth of pines. Knowledge of present temperature and rainfall alone would suggest the growth of broad-leaved deciduous trees, but these are absent except in the sheltered policies of Stornoway Castle. About 1695 Martin noted ' hazel and birch ' occurring on the south side of Loch Stornoway, but nowhere else on the Island. Even there trees are stunted as if pruned by the wind.

132 The further inhibitive influence is indeed the wind

132 (Fig. 6). The anemograph at the Butt of Lewis records one of the highest of British averages for gales and frequent breeze: for 1930–35 the mean frequency of gales (winds over 38 miles per hour) was 62. The mean speed for December and January is 25 m.p.h., which can best be realised by imagining winter travel in an open car with no wind-screen. This mean maximum is a reminder of the difficulty of tree-growth, as gales loosen or quite uproot [538] the trees. It also helps to explain the proverb: " A long sleep in a big wind " (*cadal fada ri gaoith mhoir*). This is as true for the byre as the bed-closet, for what could cattle-beast or man be doing out of doors in a winter gale? Although the mean speed drops from 18 m.p.h. in April to 13 or 14 m.p.h. in July and August, it rises in September to 18 m.p.h., with ill effects on the harvesting of late crops. Winter winds blow in full force from the end of September to mid-February at an average of 22 m.p.h. or more. The gales make winter fishing dangerous, and their force smashes breakwaters on the west coast.

Yet winds at the exposed cliff-height of the Butt are only slightly greater than those of similarly placed spots on the mainland coast, or islets like the Bell Rock (Firth of Tay), and the east of the Island is comparatively sheltered. For example, the mean annual speed of wind at the Butt was 19·2 m.p.h., and for the same period at the Bell Rock it was 18·2, at Aberdeen 9, and at Kew 7·6. When the anemograph at the Butt was moved even to a 'well-exposed' spot near Stornoway, the average number of gales for 1937–40 dropped to two-thirds of the preceding triennium. With shelter, the difference from the Butt and the approach to normal conditions on the mainland would become greater [311] still. The planting of shelter-belts would foster crops, comfort and activity on the Island.

(B) VEGETATION

1. The Vegetation-types and Pastures of the Highlands and Isles

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311 In order to see the Island problem in true proportion, the types of vegetation and rough pasture in the Highlands and Isles should be outlined. Dr. Hardy's reconnaissance botanical survey of the Highlands, with its coloured map, has been utilised in the compilation of *A Reconnaissance Map of Vegetation of Scotland.*[1] The latter has been boldly simplified in Fig. 7.

The Highland pastures are of two main regional types, eastern and western, with the addition of a few great stretches of peat moor. East of a line from Stirling to Inverness, heather is dominant, as it is on the heights around the Dornoch Firth, from north of the Cromarty Firth and Ben Wyvis to the border of Caithness. To the west of this, heather, though still found, is mixed with [233] grass and sedges. The grazings of the North-west Coast have been the adopted home of Cheviot sheep for over a century, for Cheviots are grass-feeders which cannot thrive on heather-tips. True, acid 'Dry Grass Moors' lie inland from the Beauly Firth and Dingwall. On the rest of the West Coast from Gairloch and Loch Torridon south to Kintyre, 'Marshy Grass Moors' with but little pure [233] heather clothe the lower slopes. These give way on higher slopes to 'Mountain Pastures', reaching up to about 2500

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[113] [1] M. E. Hardy, *Esquisse de la végétation des Highlands d'Écosse*, Paris, 1905; also *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, 1906, June number with map, and May number with text. A. Geddes and L. D. Stamp, *A Reconnaissance Map of the Vegetation of Scotland* (Ordnance Survey, 1/625,000: 10 miles to inch), 1953; explanatory pamphlet in the press. A résumé by L. D. Stamp has appeared in his *Land of Britain: Its Use and Misuse*, 1948, based on Tansley, *The Vegetation of the British Isles*, 1946.

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[131]

feet. These marshy grass moors, with their mountain pastures above, are the adopted home of the hardy Black-

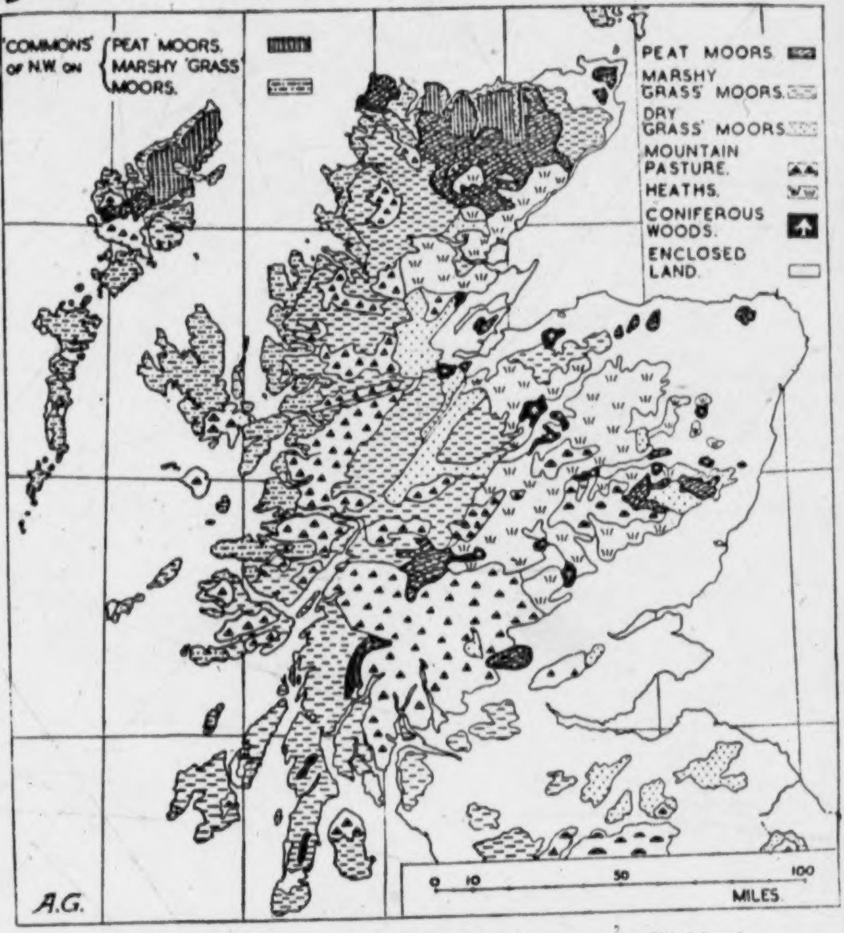
'COMMONS' of N.W. on
PEAT MOORS.
MARSHY 'GRASS' MOORS.
PEAT MOORS
MARSHY 'GRASS' MOORS.
DRY 'GRASS' MOORS.
MOUNTAIN PASTURE.
HEATHS.
CONIFEROUS WOODS.
ENCLOSED LAND.
0 10 50 100
MILES
A.G.

FIG. 7.—Map of vegetation-types and pastures of the Highlands and Hebrides

face sheep. Wherever in the west the slopes drop fairly steeply, good pasture grass with some heather may grow, or rather did grow until bracken overwhelmed them.

137 Inset into the Highlands are three desolate tracts of
134 boggy 'Peat Moor', in Sutherland, Rannoch Moor far to
the south, and on the plateaus of Lorne and Mid-Argyll;
while marginal to the Highlands are (1) the drier and more
dissected plateau peat moors between Lochnagar and
Stonehaven, and (2) the intermittent stretches of Lowland
peat moss.

137 Finally, intermixed with these are strips of surviving
or planted woodland. Below the heather moors of the
western Highlands stretch the great pine woods of Atholl,
Deeside, and Speyside and the Moray Firth. As the
heather thins out, towards the West Coast, pine gives place
to oak. Near both are found the graceful silver stems of
[177] the birch, with its small resistant leaves. These woodlands
invite the modern forester, who brings in pine, larch and
firs in the east and, in the west, notably the Sitka spruce,
brought here from the rainy western highlands of British
Columbia.

311 The uses to which the pastures are or have long been
233 put, are three: as crofters' grazings—mostly 'commons'
(and so indicated on the map), as sheep farms, or as deer
137 forests. (1) On the 'commons' there is close grazing for
[136] both cattle and sheep by crofters near the townships or the
holdings, and much peat-cutting. (2) On the hill sheep
farms there is more or less regulated burning and some
hill draining but almost no cattle pasturing; and as a
result of both facts, bracken has invaded the grassier moors.
[136] (3) On the deer forests almost no care is given and the
heather, scrub and bracken are coarse and strong. An
indication of the margin of the commons, according to
whether it 'marches' with farms or with deer forests
(given in Fig. 2 by line C), is also shown in Fig. 7 because
of its marked effect on vegetation.

133

PLATE VIIIA. TYPICAL BIOTITE GNEISS ENCLOSING AND VEINING HORNBLENDE GNEISS

(Torasclett, north-east of Tarbert)

[131]
[137]

PLATE VIIIB. OUTLIER OF STORNOWAY BEDS ON LEWISIAN GNEISS

(Dun, near Garrabost, Eye Peninsula.) The moors of North Lewis are faintly visible on the horizon

/facing p. 49/

133 2. *Plant Life in Lewis-and-Harris*

137 Lewis has been dismissed by many as a floating peat
bog, and its name has even been derived from *leodus*, a
133 bog! For good or ill, peat influences the Island, its history,
137 the distribution of its people and the economic and social
features of their life. In Lewis, peat once covered every-
182 thing except the narrow fringes of sandy machar, the
surface of the inland waters, jutting rocks and steeper hills
where drainage is rapid. Man's encroachment on that
[185] carpet has so far been mere nibbling. Except for the
[311] machar lands, every acre of ground occupied or cultivated
by man has been reclaimed from peat.

137 The Map of Vegetation and its Key portray the distribution of the main plant communities (Fig. 8).[1] All plants are of low habit with small leaves, well protected from excessive transpiration. They are mostly perennials or biennials; annuals are comparatively few. There is no burst of flowering save where the heather blooms on better-drained slopes, or where shell sand has blown, enabling clovers, vetches and meadow-sweet to give colour and scent. Moss, sedge and dwarfed heather prevail widely in tussocks.

137 Constant cropping by sheep and cattle, and also deer,
233 tends to keep vegetation low, but on the wide, boggy moors
this is a minor factor. Nor is there much systematic
[311] heather-burning. Even upon the islets of inland lochs,
untouched by grazing animals, and in spite of better drainage due to the undercutting of the waves, growth is not really luxuriant. Bracken, however, is found on the islets, and a little on some former sheep farms, but not on the heavily grazed common pastures, for cattle keep down bracken.

I.L.H.–E

[1] [see p. 50 -- analyst]

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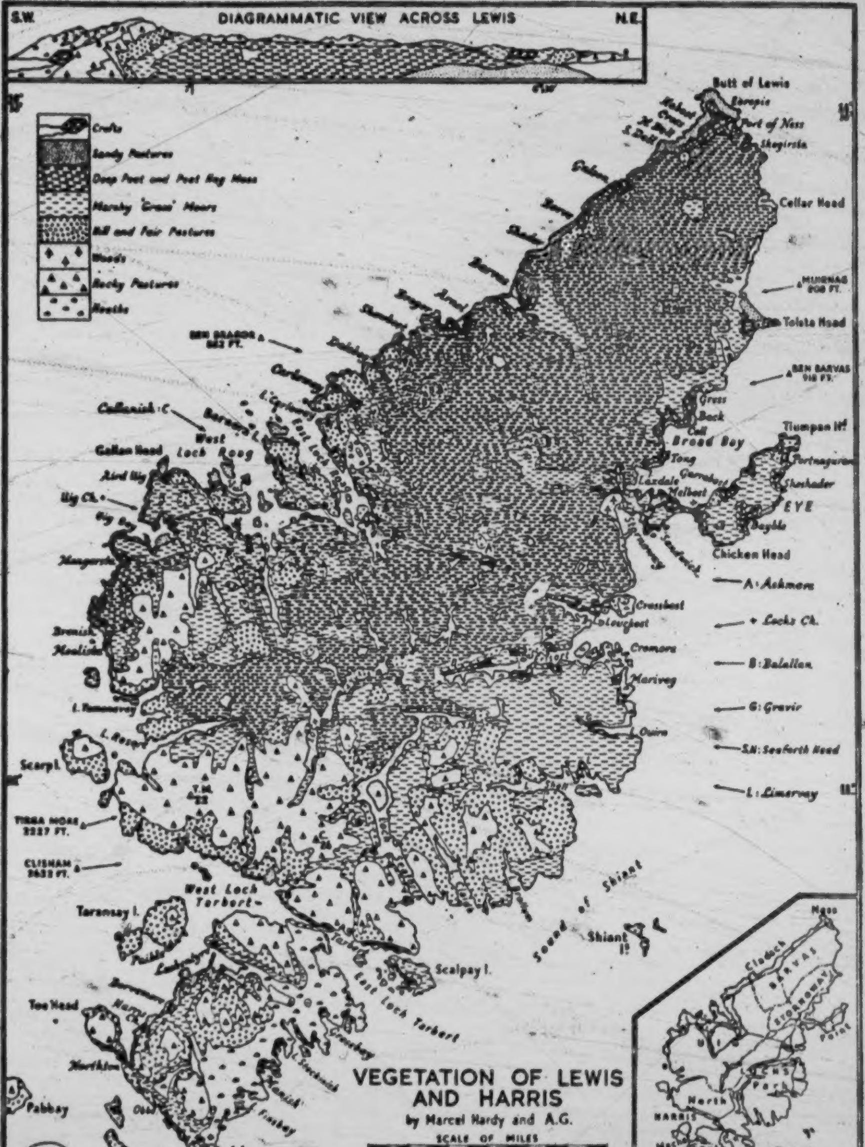
DIAGRAMMATIC VIEW ACROSS LEWIS
S.W.
N.E.
Crofts
Sandy Pastures
Deep Peat and Peat Bog Moss
Marshy 'Grass' Moors
Hill and Fair Pastures
Woods
Rocky Pastures
Heaths
Butt of Lewis
Europie
Port of Ness
Skegirsta
Cellar Head
MUIRNAG 808 FT.
Tolsta Head
BEN BARVAS
Gress
Back
Broad Bay
Tiumpan Hd
Portnaguran
Shesheder
EYE
Tong
Laxdale
Melbost
Bayble
Chicken Head
A: Achmore
+ Lochs Ch.
B: Balallan
G: Gravir
S.N: Seaforth Head
L: Limervay
Crossbost
Cromore
Marivag
Orinsay
BEN BRAGOR 862 FT.
Carloway
Callanish C
West Loch Roag
Gallan Head
Aird Uig
Uig Ch.
Uig Bay
Mangersta
Brenish
Mealista
L. Resort
Scarp I.
TIRGA MORE 2227 FT.
CLISHAM 2622 FT.
West Loch Tarbert
Taransay I.
Toe Head
Northton
Pabbay
Berneray
Rodel
Renish Pt.
East Loch Tarbert
Scalpay I.
Shiant Is.
Sound of Shiant
VEGETATION OF LEWIS AND HARRIS
by Marcel Hardy and A.G.
SCALE OF MILES
KILOMETRES
Ness
BARVAS
STORNOWAY
Point
LOCHS
Park
North
HARRIS
South
Roads
PARISHES and Districts

[632] →
[634] →
[491] →

/p. 50/

FIG. 8

137

3. *Plant Communities of the Island: Hill Moor, Peat Moss and Machar*

The types of pasture in the Island should be compared with those elsewhere. The peat moors of Lewis resemble those of northern Sutherland. The machar lands of the Uists, and of Tiree and smaller isles, surpass those of Lewis, while on the mainland and Inner Isles raised beaches provide workable, well drained soils. The 'rocky hill pastures' of our Island correspond to the rockier 'mountain pastures' and 'plateau summits' of the Highlands, and the 'fair' and 'hill pastures' of Lewis rather to their widespread 'wetter moors'. Grazing conditions are of course, similar in crofting areas alone. The edging of heather above the sea-cliffs of the Island and on the western mainland forms a picturesque element of the landscape, seen from a passing vessel, but only a narrow strip of the pastures. The plant communities shown on the Map of Vegetation (Fig. 8) must now be outlined.[1]

[134] (1) On the *Rocky Pastures* the scattered patches of soil are covered by a low and close sward, almost exclusively of perennials and grasses, such as bent (*agrostis*), common and brown, sheep's-fescue grass and wavy-hair grass (*festuca* and *Aira*); small sedges and mosses, with club moss and lichens towards the summits; heather, and fine-leaved bell-heather (*Erica cinerea*); and flowering plants like thyme, bird's-foot trefoil, tormentil and smooth heath bedstraw (*Galium*). Those rocky pastures prevail in the Forest of Harris (Plate XI).

[311] (2) *Fair and Hill Pastures.*—Below the bare rock domes

[113]

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[1] An authoritative flora of the Island is in preparation by Miss M. S. Campbell, F.L.S., British Museum (Natural History). Her "Flora of Uig" (Lewis) has appeared (Arbroath, 1945). For Dr. Hardy's tentative list of plant-names see A. Geddes, *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, vol. 52, 4, 1936.

137 there is frequently found the most thriving of the vegetation types of Lewis and the best grazing ground. It [311] [233] includes grasses such as those already named, together with purple *Molinea*, meadow soft grass (*Holcus*), and mat grass (*Nardus*); sedges (*Scirpus* and *Carex* spp.); with the field wood rush (*Luzula*) and a fair number of flowering plants. Heather is common in this and the following community (3).

With true 'hill' pastures, found especially to the east of the Forest of Harris and between Loch Seaforth and Loch Shell, are included fair pastures with good grasses on the rocky hillocks near the villages around Loch Roag and also on the low, steep hills northward to Shawbost. [134] The 'skinned land' lies in strips too narrow to be shown on the map, but may form a ring of desolation round the village. The hard moor-pan resists natural seeding of plants unless broken by the pick, but broadcasting of a cheap seed-mixture with a little fertiliser can work marked improvement.

(3) *Marshy Grass Moors.*—Where the slopes are gentle, and the acid humus has accumulated to form peat, is found coarse, tussocky, damp pasture, of sedges and grasses, grading from the 'fair' and 'hill pastures' to the beginnings of hummocky peat hags and smooth sedge moss. It covers the slopes of hills such as Ben Barvas and Muirnag and the hillocks that emerge from the great central trough of brown peat moor. It also characterises the low but broken areas in southern Lewis. This type forms a belt below the 'hill' and 'rocky' pastures of Harris. At its best its prevailing hue is olive-green turning to a silvery shade and then to russet later on. Annuals are few and the grasses are coarse.

[133] (4) *Peat Moors, Mosses and Peat Hags.*—The most

137 [133] widespread plant community in Lewis is undoubtedly the *sedge and cotton grass moors* (or ' mosses ' as they would be called in the Lowlands), which overlie deep peat generally at low levels, on flat or slightly rolling grounds. The peaty floor is waterlogged and boggy, and the carpet rises into tufts, dense cushions or mops, out of which bristle innumerable stalks, thread-shaped, sheathed, fibrous and elastic. There are few flowers apart from the bog asphodel, while heather does not thrive but is stunted. On the slopes, sedges (*Scirpus* and *Carex* spp.) and cotton grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) dominate, and in the hollows, sphagnum moss. Owing to slope and consequent erosion, the surface may break into hags (or ' bruachs '), separated by deep and more or less broad channels of bare peat with puddles.

[311] For reclamation by tractor and peat plough, smoothness is essential, combined with some slope for drainage. From observation of the fragments of poor pasture topping the hags in channelled eroded peat, it can be noted that drainage alone is not enough to create good pasture, though it [241] is the first step. In order to complement the work of drainage, fertilisers must be applied to encourage plants which absorb water in quantity and transpire it freely in the course of rapid growth. For it may be said that plants like heather—adapted to withstand drought, physical or ' physiological '—do not transpire water in any great quantity. Thus they fail to 'drain the ground from above', as juicier grasses or fodder plants do by the vigorous ascent, transpiration and renewed absorption of water.

[134] (5) *Heather Moor*.—The common heather (*Calluna*) dominates on many steep slopes and rocky bluffs, sometimes on acid humus, or again on decomposed rock and screes, generally at low levels. Among the chief plants

137 found with the dominant are the fine-leaved bell heather, sometimes with crowberry (*Empetrum*) in rocky places, while grass or sedge may be mixed with it in places.

At the very edge of the sea-cliffs, where the moorland pasture or heather thins out, the rock is cushioned with sea pink. Or where a stream has cut a sheltered dell, protected as in the Stornoway policies or not too near a village, one may find a few woody plants—a little hazel, creeping willow or honeysuckle.

137 134 (6) *Sandy Pastures.*—In many bays, as at Valtos (West Loch Roag) the sandy or sand-influenced habitat falls into three zones:

(*a*) The line of storm beach, formed of hummocky dunes, which dams off what was the inner part of the bay. This line is more or less broken where the stream breaks through. At their crown the dunes are partially fixed by marram grass (*Psamma*), but show hollows of loose sand. Just north of Stornoway the Melbost sands have thrown out a high bar which has partly dyked and reclaimed or poldered the bay behind. Almost at the opposite end of the Island, lying in from the Sound of Taransay, near Luskintyre, a sandy dyke is thrust out, but this too is kept open by tide and spate, and the sands within are covered at high tide. Such places could be reclaimed.

(*b*) Behind the dune ridge, where this is virtually complete, [132] is found a dry sandy flat. Even this is liable to inundation by storm, tide and spate, but its sandy pasture is periodically broken for the cultivation of potatoes, or even barley. It is the lightest of soils at the best, while if cultivated continuously it simply

137 134 blows away, no doubt because the humus rots and quite fails to bind the sand. These two types together form the true machar.

(*c*) From the machar rise the slopes of drift-covered rock which bear a top dressing of blown shell fragments, more or less mixed with the soil by treading and cultivation, and imperceptibly giving place to the undiluted ' black soils ' of moor and croft with their corresponding vegetation or crops. The shell-sand is often blown onto the rough pastures high above a bay.

Where a portion of the true machar has been cultivated it is allowed to seed itself. A sprinkling of weeds is followed by the re-establishment of a mixed flora. In both the sand and the consolidated sand-covered drift grow wild white clover and vetches; and among the grasses are rye grass (*Lolium*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus*), cat's-tail (*Phleum*) and meadow grass (*Poa*). Other plants include familiar weeds and wild-flowers like yarrow, cow-parsnip, golden rod (*Solidago*), silverweed, wild carrot, thyme, plantain, sorrel, yellow rattle, harebell, eyebright, pansy and many more. Arrival from the bare brown moorland to the sand-blown slopes or dells is made a pleasure by stream-side flowers like meadow-sweet.

137 311 *Woods and Cultivation.*—In addition to the woods indicated on the map,^ in Stornoway Castle policies, shelter-belts or plantations occur at certain lodges. Cultivation, as will be explained in the section on crofting, is rarely continuous; and the map shows areas as cultivated which are far from being either continuous crop land or [185] even permanent grass of the first quality. Yet since this map was drawn the improved area has been extended somewhat

^[see map on p.50--analyst]

137 by reclamation, notably at the Macaulay Demonstration
311 Farm on the 'peat moss' of Arnish Moor (south of
185 Stornoway), then too small to be shown, and in South-west Harris where new crofts were laid out in the thirties.

137 The six main types of vegetation in the Island may be grouped as three. First are the Hill Pastures and Moors: (1) 'Rocky' among the bare hill-tops of Harris and Uig, and (2) 'Fair' on favourable slopes, which merge into (3) 'Marshy Grass Moors' of coarse grass and sedges, heath and rushes. Secondly come (4) the vast brown 'Peat Mosses and Moors', either smooth and wet, with sedge and cotton grass, or channelled and cut up into hags; near the broken edges of the island cliffs this expanse is often fringed by (5) the 'Heather Moor'. Thirdly, by the sandy bays, are (6) the 'Machar lands', *i.e.* the 'Sandy Pastures', rich with clover; though narrow, this coastal plain is all important to stock-rearing and potato-growing, and so to settlement. In traditional terms, these three groups form hill moor, peat moss and sandy shores: *monadh*, *mòine* and *machair*.

(c) CROFTING AND THE CROFTERS' YEAR

1. *Place of Settlement and Choice of Work—Past and Present*

175 Lewis and 'Harrey', as they were called four centuries
114 ago, were well described by Dean Monro,[1] and his descrip-
tion is fundamental to the present scene. "Harrey is very
311 fertile and fruitful for corne, store and fishing, twice mair
of delving is in or of teilling", which appears to mean

---

[113] [1] Dean Monro, *The Western Islands of Scotland . . . in 1549*, reprinted by A. Mackay, Stirling, 1934.

175 that the spade and foot-plough (*cas chrom*) were used for
114 double the area ploughed. From Monro and from the
311 precise Statistical Accounts of the eighteenth century, it is
[241] clear that pony-drawn ploughs were usual in the smoother
parts of Lewis. In North Harris are 'abundance of
[127] Deir'. We must not forget here that 'faire' and fertile
are comparative terms for the West. "Lewis is faire and
[136] weill inhabit at the coste, ane fertile and fruitful countrey,
for the maist part beire [barley], with 4 Paroche Kirkes."
[226] There is "ane castell callit Stornoway . . . with 3 salt
loches, very fine for take of herrings . . . [and] infinite fresh
water loches. In the Lewis there are 8 waters with take
of salmont. . . ." There were also "Whales . . ." In
"a cove 2 fadoms deep at the ebb sea, uses Whytuns
(whitings) to be slain with huiks", there were "very many
haddocks and Men with their wandes sitting [as today]
upon the Craiges of that cove, and Lades [boys] and Women
[136] also. . . . In this Ile there are many Sheip for it is very
guid for the same. For they lay furth ever one mures
and glens and never enters in a house and their wool is
bot anes in the zeire pluckit off them in some fauldes."
[236] In Zetland wool is still plucked, not sheared.

The description of reclamation is specially worthy of
note: "In this countrey all is peit mossland at the Sea
cost, and the plaice where he wins his peitts this zeire
[year] . . . there he sawes his corne the nixt zeire, after
that he guidds it weill with Sea ware" [*i.e.*, improves or
[245] manures it with seaweed]. On "Ellan Colm Cill [an islet
apparently on the east coast south of Stornoway at the
mouth of Loch Erisort] Macloyd of the Lewis has ane faire
Orchard, and he that is Gardener has that Ile [rent]
free. . . ."

175
185
311 Around the coast of Lewis no absolute limit is set to

175 reclamation, which Dean Monro has described as he saw it.
311 Technique and economic return must be balanced against
185 the factors of nature. Although natural conditions are
[182] difficult, they may not form a complete explanation of the
relative arrest of reclamation in the nineteenth century;
for here separation from the agricultural advances of the
Lowlands by barriers of mountain and sea caused the retention
of unprogressive methods until the wave of agricultural
improvement had spent itself by the middle of
[178] last century. To this cause must be added other influences
contrasted to those leading to peasant advance in the rest of
[171] Western Europe: the political history of the Gaeldom
after 1745, the revolution in land tenure and in the social
life of the upper classes, the commercial, industrial and
imperial development of Great Britain. All these factors
help to explain the contrast offered to the Lews by western
Denmark and western Norway, lands in which the soil
and climate are comparable to those of the Island. Yet
reclamation is proceeding, as on skinned land at Ness,
where plots of ground have been steadily broken in by
pick and by spade or plough.

226 Settlement and agricultural land are placed around
the coasts with their fishing grounds. In spite of what
[361] was often said—that the Lewisman is and has always been
[311] primarily a fisherman—fishing alone is not enough to
account for this distribution, for the agricultural conditions
[241] on the whole are also best along the coasts, or were so for
early settlers. As Stevens remarked, the light sandy
'machar' lands are there, and the fringe of partially improved
soil close by; drainage is, on the whole, better,
while shell-sand and sea-ware are to be had for manure.
241 The sea-ware also serves still as fodder, while one or two
824 sorts are sometimes cooked for human food; carragheen

241
824 (Chondrus), for example, is used as a thickener of milk to
make a cheese-like mould. Dulse is also plucked.[1]

222 The type of coastal form and vegetation alters the
182 relative importance of crofting and fishing—and the balance
chosen is significant. (1) Where the coastline is smooth,
241 and leads inland from sandy machar with its clover to
226 sand-ameliorated ' black land ' of smooth topography lending
itself to ploughing, and the whole is backed by extensive
pastures, the tract is relatively well-off for crofting but
may be ill-placed for fishing. (2) Where the coast is either
indented or salient with rocky loch-sides or steep promontory
cliffs, a rolling or rocky topography, little shell
sand, and (on the promontories) a shortage of pasture, it is
ill-placed for crofting; but it is favourable to fishing either
by virtue of sheltered sea lochs or of salient promontories,
one or other side of which tends to give relative shelter
to the fishing ground (chosen according to the direction of
the wind, to avoid being blown on to a dangerous, lee shore).
Hence the site of a settlement has had much to do with
the choice and opportunities for a communal vocation,
from prehistory to the present time, as we shall see.

103 Significant local characteristics emerge in the names of
634 the ancient districts (inset with the Map of Vegetation,
Fig. 8). In the north is Ness (Norse, ' nose ' or cape);
175 along the west is Cladach (Gaelic, a stony beach); while
in South Harris the western ' Machar ' contrasts with the
eastern ' Bays '. ' Park ', a sheep-run in the early nineteenth
century, was the Norse ' East-fell '. In contrast,
the parishes of Lewis centre on four churches, linked to
[491] the road-system. This radiates from Stornoway in five
directions: east, NE., NW., SW., and south to Tarbert,

---

[173] [1] Pulling dulse (*Rhodymenia*) is one of the ' delights ' of Iona as told in a poem long attributed to Saint Columba!

103

634 Harris; South Harris is ringed by a road, extended
175 recently to take in the more isolated 'Bays' townships.
491

2. *The Crofts and Crofting Ways*

241 The prevailing modern unit of cultivation and tenure in the Islands is the croft, the land held individually by each small landholder or 'crofter'. The Anglo-Scottish term croft (Gaelicised as *croit*) meant steadily cropped, infield land, manured and never left fallow, and distinguished from the unmanured outfield with its long fallows [175] [427] and poor out-turn. This term came into common use in the Highlands and Isles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the splitting up of the older unit of cultivation and tenure, the small joint farm, with its little team of [423] fellow-workers or 'small tenants'. By 1830 group tenure had been replaced by individual holding of crofts, but with the pasture still held in common, as it is to the present day, and an allotted strip of the machar.

The Lewis croft consists of a nominal five acres of crops, of oats, barley (or bere) and potatoes, sometimes with recent additions of turnips, and more often a small [175] [428] hay crop. The word 'nominal' is used because during the nineteenth century the croft had often been subdivided between two or more sons, without addition by reclamation to bring each subdivision up to the acreage of the original croft. Moreover, in the hilly southern part of the Island, cultivation is in little patches instead of in continuous fields. There, narrow ditches have been dug and the soil heaped up to form little ridges about ten feet by four, banked up [178] by turf. These are known as *feannagan* in Gaelic, or in English, 'lazy-beds'—a term in use as early as the time of Burt, two hundred years ago. Thus only about two-

241 thirds of an area nominally under crops actually grows them. It need hardly be said that such crofts do not support a family.

The means of cultivation have been either pony-drawn ploughs in the smoother north, or else the foot-plough [407] (*cas·chrom*), and the straight spade in the hilly south. I saw the almost obsolete foot-plough used on hilly ground near Rodel, Harris, in 1919. In the smoother lands from Stornoway and Barvas northward, however, the crofts then were already laid out in parallel strips, no more than twelve to fifteen feet wide, divided by open drains. Open drains have increasingly been converted into underground drains over which pony and plough can pass. The cattle feed on the rough pasture or on the grass about the crofts, supplemented by hay cut with a sickle from the grassy edges of [178] the 'lazy-beds'. Quite recently, rotation grass has been sown on the arable strips, and mown for hay by the scythe. [407] Tractors were introduced in war-time, in 1942.

In many of the villages, cattle are still taken to the 233 summer pastures out on the moors some miles from the 221 crofts. Those who herd the cattle live in huts or shiel-311 ings, annually re-roofed. In the congested 'Point district' (the Eye Peninsula), the cattle must go to the moor on the main island or be taken on to their owners' crofts from late May or early June to about the 10th of August, in order to clear the common grazing and allow the grass to recover. This migration takes place, of course, because 233 of the restricted area of common pasture. On the other 311 hand, pasture is plentiful in the parish of Lochs, lying all round some of the villages, and here the use of the shieling has been practically abandoned. In almost all villages, with the exception of those of the Eye Peninsula, there is less summer pasturing than formerly; fewer cattle are sent

233 away, and for a shorter period. The sheep wander over
311 the moors all the year round, though they hang about the
crofts when the winter is severe.

221 A comparison with mountainous Norway or the Alps
and their high summer pastures suggests itself; but in
132 Lewis altitude is almost negligible, and the shielings may
171 lie only two to five hundred feet above that of the crofts
[133] beside the shore. The difference between winter and
summer is in any case less, snow being rare and the condi-
[311] tions being such that even in summer the shieling pasture
remains poor. Hence it is that while modern Norse and
Alpine economy still maintain the summer pasture, the
shielings have died out in the Highlands and are slowly
decaying in Lewis. Seasonally, stock are transported over
longer distances, from Highland to Lowland pastures.

181 Reasons for the continuance of these and other crofting
ways, or for their abandonment, are not of an economic
[178] order alone: not only the remuneration received for labour,
[461] but the feeling for the work counts enormously. Visiting
a couple of distant shielings in the summer of 1919, I
found that two lads newly home from the Navy had come
up from their village 'for a holiday', bringing rods for
trout-fishing and high spirits for play. By day they fished
or flirted. By night they slept in one of the two shielings,
while the two laughing lasses they had come to visit shared
the none too wide couch of the other shieling with the
two older women there. One of these was a matron with a
motherly twinkle in her eye, the other was a spinster in
whose eyes there shone a memorably vivid light; she was
the sister (as I found later) of a noted minister on the main-
land. The bare simplicity of shieling life is traditionally
softened by fellowship and a gaiety that is not beyond
[538] control. A Lowland poet once coined a famous phrase,

181
[538] “ the lone shieling of the misty island ”. Traditional
Gaelic songs tell rather of shielings grouped within hail,
[533] with their sweethearting and good cheer !

3. *Crops and Stock*, circa *1938*

178 As the thirties mark a transition between early condi-
241 tions prevailing until 1919 and those of 1947–53 (Appendix I),
the present tense is used.

311 Of the Island's 528,000 acres, including deer forests
632 on the Harris border partly grazed, there are 24,000
acres of arable and grass land. Barvas parish leads with
6500 acres, then come Stornoway, Uig and Lochs, Harris
being last with 3300 acres. Roughly one-third of the
Island's arable and grass land, or 32 per cent, is per-
manent grass, chiefly machar, with a maximum of 39
per cent in Uig, but a minimum of 9 per cent in rocky
311 Lochs, most of this on one small farm. About 10 per
cent of the arable and grass land area is given to hay
246 production ; of this, rather less than one-third is rotation
hay grown on the plough rigs or parks, and rather more
than two-thirds is hay from permanent grass. Lochs,
lacking machar, has 20 per cent hay, while Barvas, better
[632] off for machar, has only 4 per cent. Even this proportion
of rotation hay shows an increase on the crofts since 1919.
Stornoway parish, it will be noted, occupies an inter-
mediate place, but if the facts for Point (Eye) district were
contrasted with those for the villages along the machar,
the differences between them would emerge clearly. As
it is, they can be guessed from the vegetation map showing
311 the machar. Oats is the chief crop, and occupies 33 per
243 cent or just one-third of the arable and grass of the Island ;
excluding the permanent grass, it constitutes half the crop.

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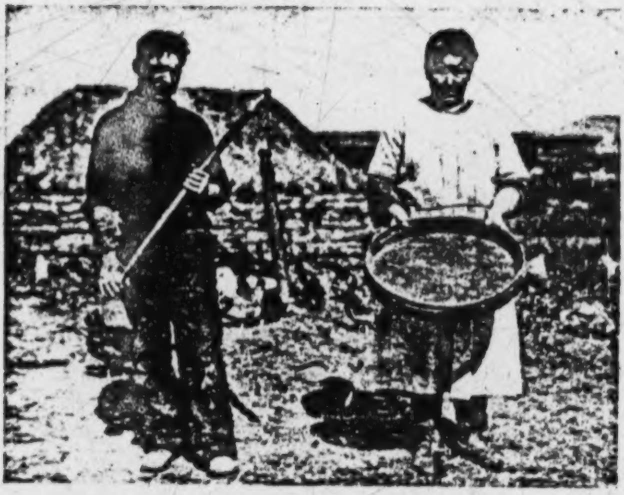

PLATE IXA. CROFTERS WITH FLAIL AND WINNOWING VESSEL

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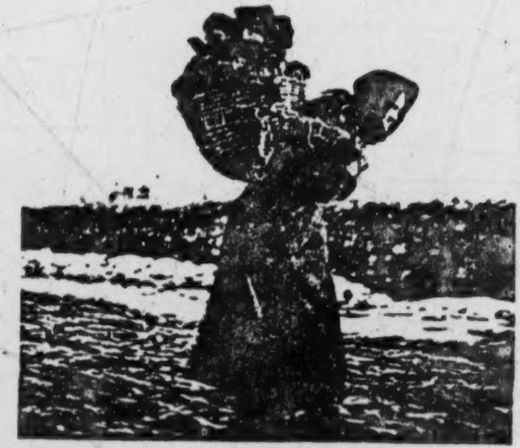

PLATE IXB. A LEWIS WOMAN CREELING PEAT (*c.* 1925)

Except in cold weather (as here) the skirt is rolled up over a petticoat to form a pad at the waist just below the creel

/facing p. 64/

311 In Lochs it occupies only one-quarter of arable and grass.
243 Barley, mostly four-row, or bere, is less important as a food
today than formerly, and now occupies only 6 per cent,
and, though it reaches 13 per cent in Barvas, with its
[632] machar, hardly any is grown in Lochs. Rye (*seagal*), still
found in the machars of the Uists, is little grown in the
Lews. Potatoes grow well everywhere, occupying about
15 per cent of the area, though townships with plentiful
machar land grow most. Turnips are being gradually
introduced, and though their liability to disease has somewhat discouraged the crofters, the proportion is now about
311 2·3 per cent. Cabbages occupy a small area (1 per cent),
244 latterly along with lettuces, carrots and the like.

Rotation hay and turnips being almost unused up to
241 1919, oats was grown repeatedly before rotation with barley
or potatoes, and with no bare fallow. While heavy manuring maintained the fertility, the crop by July was ablaze
with corn marigold (and other weeds) through which the
thin oats struggled to rear its head. Thickly sown, the
return was exceedingly small. Except for the machar (if
any) there was no 'out-field' as elsewhere in old Scotland.

The smallness of the crofts and the poorness of the
crops explain the very small total return. Hence little
oats is now ground for meal and the potatoes do not last
[178] through the year, though few are sold. The low out-turn
[246] also explains why even fodder is scarce, though much more
of the crop is secured for wintering than formerly. Summing up, a croft of 6 acres—though a little too large to be
quite typical—includes a couple of acres of grass and hay,
almost as much of oats, and the remainder bears potatoes
and barley, with turnips, cabbages and garden produce.

[174] In the past, the cropped land was unfenced and un-
[178] walled. At present, the rule is to encourage the con-

241 struction of a single ring fence round the croft land, which
also circumscribes a good deal of rough grass, the ground
[178] being generally rough in parts. Individual crofts are
fenced only where exceptionally large, or when the pos-
[654] sessor is unusually enterprising or is isolated. Depart-
mental help is given in the provision of fencing materials
[632] for a township, the crofters supplying labour. As the
233 animals are allowed to graze freely in winter, this limits
241 crops to those sown and harvested in the summer half-year
—a serious matter for any man of enterprise who cannot
afford a fence of his own. Cattle kept on the croft when
the fields are under crops have to be either tethered or
driven to a common pasture. A drystone dyke may
enclose a small patch of garden, rarely well tended, the
school gardens providing a laudable exception.

233 Shortly before 1939, the stock included under 1000
agricultural horses and well over 10,000 cattle (of which
more than 6500 were milch-cows), but practically no pigs.
Sheep number 42,000 ewes, or 94,000 ewes and followers
in June. Thus there are 2·5 cattle on an average holding,
of which more than 1·5 are milch cows; and there are
233 half a score ewes or about a score of sheep in June. The
178 size and the quality of the cattle have greatly improved
since first I visited the island in 1919; at that time the
mongrel Highland breed must have been the very poorest
in Britain. The Blackface sheep are small, either through
underfeeding or because of traces left from the old, smaller
Hebridean breed, or from both causes. On an average
there is, or was, one horse, or pony, to every five or six
231 crofter holdings, but their number is much reduced.

233 Actually, such Island averages for horses and sheep are
somewhat misleading. In particular, either there are more
[182] horses than the average in a given district, or almost none,

233 according to the relief, as explained. Thus the Barvas
182 parish with its smooth topography permits of ploughing,
and there is, or rather was, one horse between two crofts,
231 or one pair between four or five. In rocky Uig or in Lochs,
however, there is only one pony between ten or twelve crofts.
492 Lending or hiring of horses has still to be practised, but
426 within manageable limits, though the increase in 'cars' had
lessened the number of horses, even before the war-time introduction of tractors. Hiring is often done for cash, though this conflicts with older communal custom. Yet lending had its difficulties: "The borrowed horse", says the lender bitterly, in the Gaelic proverb, "is never tired!"

233 The number of sheep per holding is noticeably highest
184 in Harris, with one score ewes per holding. The sheep
pasture of North Harris was well spoken of by Dean Monro, and the link with the home industry of Harris, its weaving, is evident.

241 Comparisons with the western mainland show, in
holdings of similar or rather large size, the diminished
311 amount of cereals now grown there even by crofters. The increased proportion of grass reflects both the greater dependence on bought provisions, and also the fact that the West is not a land to ripen crops, but that it can grow grass for stock.

4. *The Moors as Pasture: Game and Sport*

311 In order to estimate the relative value of the rough
511 grazings of Lewis and Harris, it will be well to compare
these with the moors lying across the Minch and east of Cape Wrath. There also may be found crofting communities whose economics are similar to those of Lewis, so that the stock carried on their pastures will furnish some

311 indication of their worth. As above, the period is *c.* 1937–
511 1938. The Island's increased sheep stock is shown in
Appendix II (ii) (a) to 1953.

[233] The Lewis and Harris pastures carry on an average
about one ewe to 9 or 10 acres, that is, one ewe or lamb
to 4 acres in June (the month of the agricultural returns).
A good mainland grazing like Glen Shiel carries one ewe
to 6 acres, while poorer grazings like Kintail and Farr
carry one ewe to 10 or 14 acres respectively. Nowhere,
however, can the rough grazing support the newly weaned
ewe lambs (or hoggs) throughout the winter, which have
either to be brought to the enclosed 'low ground' (of
which there is never enough to supply both grass and
winter feed) or sent to the Lowlands in autumn and
brought back in spring, at a total cost of about 10s. each
before 1939. In Lewis, for lack of grass, there is considerable
loss in winter among the crofters' sheep. Constructive
measures for the future must be based on an
increased supply of winter feed.

137 The game consist of red deer, grouse and hares, while
511 salmon and trout are fished in stream and loch. The deer
range over Harris, Park and the Uig hills, but are seldom
seen north of Achmore. They are of ordinary quality and
size, and before 1939 the average number of heads for the
year totalled about 190 stags and 80 hinds. It is not known
[529] when they were introduced. In the south there may be
a certain amount of 'deer stealing', as in most deer forests
surrounded by crofts, in spite of a score of keepers and
deer-stalkers, and other employees at shooting lodges.
Grouse are relatively scarce compared with those on drier
[825] mainland moors. Mountain hares have multiplied since
their introduction in 1853, when, it is said, the first hare,
seen near a village towards evening with its white winter
coat, was thought to be supernatural.

511
226 coat, was thought to be supernatural. The fishing, too, is
511 of good standard: a typical annual catch including 1700
salmon, 5000 sea-trout and 1800 brown trout; and it was
for this, as well as for the shootings, that the moors pertaining to the different shooting or fishing lodges and hotels
137 were bought at Lord Leverhulme's sale. The absence of
233 foxes was important to sheep-rearing before the introduction of guns, and is still a favourable factor.

5. *Sea-fishing*

226 Fish have always contributed to the diet of the Islesfolk,
178 whether they fished from coracles or boats, or with 'lang
wands' from the shore as they still do, and as they did in
[262] the days of Dean Monro and, no doubt, right back to
[433] neolithic times. The relative importance of fishing and
agriculture, however, has always varied according to place
[241] and time.

Fishing in modern and historic, and also in prehistoric,
182 times—to judge from the kitchen middens of Uig—has
226 always flourished more where there were deep sea-lochs;
241 and settlement resulted, even though rocky hillsides made
[178] ploughing difficult or impossible. Conversely, agriculture
has offered better opportunity on smooth coasts with a
[172] variety of soils, though fishing was poorer there. Thus
the men of Stornoway Bay and Eye, of eastern lochs and of the Harris bays, like those of Loch Roag on the west, have long been partly fishermen. In the extreme north, too, men of Ness—with the chance of choosing their fishing grounds on the north, west or east of the island and with their little rocky port giving shelter, of a sort, from south-
[461] west gales—were good fishermen; they are good seamen
[829] still. "The fishing of the Barvas folk" is an old gibe,

182 226 241 [829] [461] meaning that the men of that village, and its immediate neighbourhood, were the last to put to sea and the first to return. The Barvas folk could retort that they would have been fools to do anything else on a straight exposed coast; and that anyway their pony-drawn ploughs were of more use than the foot ploughs of the rocky south. A form of provender taken indirectly from the sea was the sea-birds and eggs from the sea-cliffs and islets like Rona, north-west of the Butt. This helped to support a few families in St. Kilda and on the rocky Shiant Islands south-east of Harris.

175 226 [178] 504 501 Fishing remained backward and primitive, however, until the nineteenth century. After developing in a promising way, it was checked before the First World War, and fell into decay during and after it. Decay has, of course, been widespread. In 1935 the chief ports of the East Coast, from Leith with Granton northward by Fraserburgh to Wick—a round dozen—had still an average of 250 to 300 vessels, 3000 in all. These were chiefly of steam or motor auxiliary power and valued (with fishing gear) at £2,750,000. Orkney and Zetland, too, had each their 300 boats. The whole West Coast, however, from Stornoway to Ballantrae, had only 2000 boats, valued at less than one-tenth of the fleet of the East, and worth only a fraction of this, to judge from prices in the open market. Nearly 400 boats were still on the register for Lewis and Harris (Stornoway district) and another 300 for the rest of the Outer Isles. But fewer put to sea each year, even from Stornoway itself.

182 226 A major drawback to herring fishing in the Stornoway district is the uncertainty in the movements of the herring shoals. On the Clyde, moreover, herring can be sent fresh to the city but further north they must be cured. Whereas

182 on the East Coast and in Orkney and Zetland there are
226 comparatively well-marked seasons at which the herring
can be expected, Stornoway appears to lie marginally to
their main migrations. Thus the amount of the catch
varies and curers have been disinclined to set up large
curing stations such as those which deal with the enormous
influx at the height of the season on the East Coast. A
partial compensation is found in the continuance of herring
fishing in winter.

226 While fishing from rowing boats for saith, lythe and
[178] mackerel still supplies food for home in summer, fishing
with long lines in winter and spring brought cod and other
white fish, sun-dried and salted, which became an important
export though declining sharply after 1900 and of no
importance since 1919. Lobster fishing is undertaken in
small boats with two or three men from many townships,
and two ponds have been reopened, one on Bernera, Lewis,
and the other at Stockinish in Harris to store the lobsters.
Conditions in 1935 and 1951–53 are compared in Appendix
I (iii) and II (iii).

6. *The Annual Rhythm of Life*

221 It is appropriate here to show how fishing and crofting
fitted together into the seasonal calendar a hundred years
ago, and shortly before and after the war of 1914–18.
[182] The Lewisman's year shows its relationship to the seasons,
[175] with their temperature, rainfall and wind (Fig. 9). A
century wrought changes: cod fishing declined as the
[178] herring fishing grew in importance; but the latter fell
away again after the war. Partly as a result, weaving has
[286] become important, the men fitting into the idle periods
between the brief peaks of spring and harvest work.

461 Men's work can be roughly estimated as either light,
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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 72]

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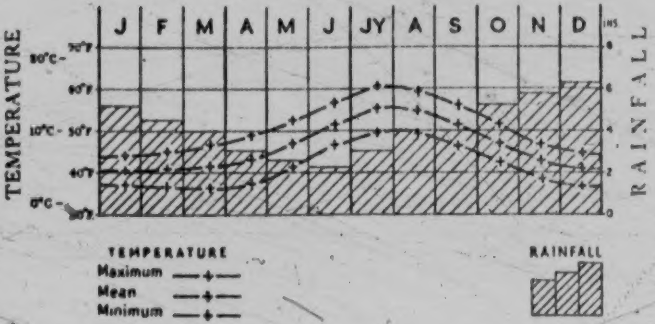
(a) TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION

Monthly averages for Lewis (Stornoway)



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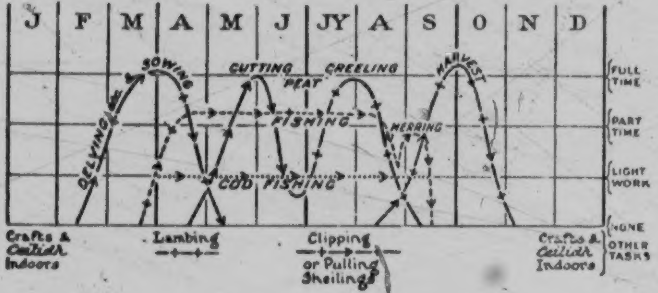
(*b*) ANNUAL RHYTHM OF SEASONAL LABOUR *c.* 1800



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(*c*) ANNUAL RHYTHM OF SEASONAL LABOUR 1900-1930

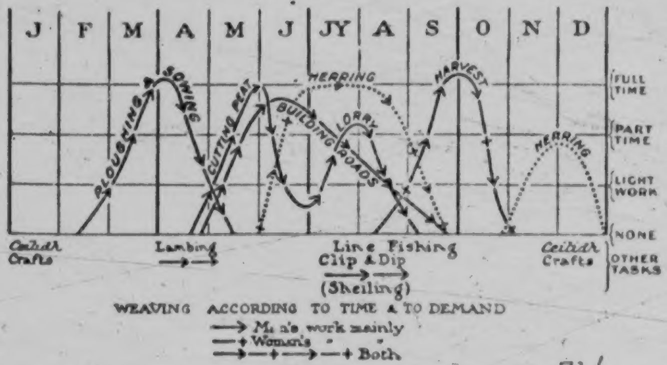

FIG 9

p. 71/

461 part-time or (to use a convenient phrase) 'overtime',
462 meaning by this a special effort such as cannot be maintained
for long. Women's work, on the other hand, has a con-
tinuous element of 'part-time' occupations, which can be
simplified to 'light' work, when a woman's services are
also needed at harvest or to carry in peats, and the like.

462 One vital point in the life of peasant women is too
often uncontrolled: maternity, with its crisis of childbirth.
000 Among wild creatures the young are normally born in
spring, when food is abundant and daylight long; but
among mankind there is no clear season for parenthood.
462 This has its compensations, for neighbour-wives can, and
do, help one another, turn about. It also has its draw-
backs where women have a large share in the seasonal
round; and a heavy period of work, such as creeling peat,
may strain a woman for life if it comes when she should
have light occupation. It may well be that old Gaelic
customs, from courtship through marriage, provided
protection.

462 The seasons being still the same, the earlier sequence of
221 traditional tasks is maintained through the year with certain
differences. The upper graph‸ shows the men ploughing
175 or delving, as the land permitted, from February to a
full-time peak in March–April. From then, women
helped increasingly. By March, nets had to be got
ready and the boats put in order for the fishing season,
closing in September. In townships well situated for cod-fisheries, fishing for sale must have been almost full-time
work for many crews, in the season; elsewhere it seems to
have been no more than light work for food alone. Ashore,
women baited the lines and dried the cod. In April–May
the women would see that their few ewes bore their lambs
and suckled them in safety; and in spring the cows would

‸[see p. 91-analyst]

462 calve. For peat-cutting, the men took advantage of the
221 driest months, with a peak in May–June; and after the
peat stacked on the moor had dried through the midsummer
175 months, the women set out to creel it in, before the autumn
rain should have made the bogs too soft, and stacked it
near their doors. The fishing season usually closed with
some herring fishing in August–September. The clipping,
or rather pulling off, of the wool as it began to be shed,
was done chiefly by men, in July–August. Then, too, the
absence of fences made herding doubly necessary to protect
the growing crops.

Some relief was given by the departure of many of the
cattle to the shielings, where a few girls and women would
stay through July and August, once men and women
together had driven the cattle there. Cows kept at home
were, and still are, tethered, or herded close at hand.
[178] Even now the hay harvest is insignificant, and until this
century it hardly existed, except for a little put by in a
221 tiny barn. Towards the end of the summer, roofs were
175 stripped of their thin thatch, and fresh turf was laid on
the light rafters and covered with barley straw. Then as
now, harvest came in September–October, all helping in
reaping the oats with the scythe or the sickle, and pulling
up the barley by the root. With the onset of winter winds,
rain and cold, the chief outdoor tasks of the year were over.

Throughout the year there were small jobs to be done,
and in the past, owing to the imperfection of implements,
[462] constant small repairs were necessary. Indoors in winter
[286] the women prepared the wool together and wove it.
Baskets were also made then, the coarser types by men.
By all these means the essentials of subsistence were largely
met, so long as the seasons were reasonably good. Except
for salt for the housewife and iron for the smith, the food

221 and clothing, firing and shelter produced met local needs.
175 Further questions of early economy belong to Part Two,
as do those of the festivals by which the seasons were
initiated and closed, along with the phases of human life.

221 A century later (as indicated in the lower graph), agricultural
tasks were much the same, but the character of
[178] fishing had altered greatly. Herring fishing was at its
[433] height in the Island for some fifteen years, or half a generation,
before 1914; but it never recovered from the difficulties
of the war and after-war periods. The curves of
the summer, autumn and winter fishing indicate the 'full-time'
activity of summer, and the 'part-time' work of
[462] early winter. Not only the men, but the women participated,
the women being employed in gutting and kippering.
Boats and men fished further afield. Women were employed
in gutting in early summer in the Scots East Coast
fishing, which preceded that of the West Coast and was
followed by the East Anglian autumn fishing. Some line-fishing
continued locally in summer, but it has now almost
ceased. The building and repair of roads increased after
the middle of the century. The carting of peats, stacked
by the roadsides, lessened 'creeling'; but it is particularly
haulage by lorry which has replaced carrying by the creel,
so lightening women's labour.

[178] Indoors, primitive crafts tended to be superseded as
machine-made articles replaced those of native material
[571] and manufacture; but the *ceilidh* ('*cailey*'), the meeting
'together', continued, though the arts of song and poetic
462 improvisation declined. In Harris the women had woven
and spun for centuries and have continued to do so for home
283 use and sale; in Lewis the women gave up weaving in the last
286 century, few spinning since then and none weaving. Thirty
178 years ago only an occasional weaver, always a man, could be

178 found in a Lewis village; but in the ten to twenty years
462 before 1939, the so-called 'Harris' tweed industry spread
283 enormously in Lewis, accompanied by the construction of
286 large spinning mills in Stornoway which supply yarn to
male weavers. One further activity, kelp-making, was
221 important for a time, although—not being strictly a
824 traditional task—it is not represented in the upper graph,
178 nor yet in the lower one, having declined after 1825 and
disappeared (in the Island) long before the present century.
Such was the annual rhythm of seasonal labour prevalent
during the last generation, and a hundred years before.

7. *Rural Changes in Diet, Dress and Inter-marriage, and in Mobility: 1919–39*

178 Many outward changes occurred in the twenty years
262 after the close of the First World War. Till the Island
was able to benefit from the commercial advances of the
146 mainland, it had no adequate relief from the famines of
early times; in recent years the quantity of food has been
[177] rather more adequate. With the import of new foods,
the consumption of vitamins at first declined: there was
greater consumption of white bread from Glasgow and less
of fresh vegetables (as ruined garden walls bear witness),
and less, too, of cod-liver oil with the cessation of cod-
[244] fishing. Latterly, fenced gardens with vegetables and
lettuce are providing vitamins, and fresh fruit (unobtainable
even after 1919) is commonly on sale all the year
round, so that a more rational dieting, when it can be
afforded, is tending to recover lost ground and perhaps
more.[1]

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[1] E. P. Cathcart (*et al.*), *Studies in Nutrition: an Enquiry into the Diet of Families in the Highlands and Isles: III, Lewis* (Medical Research Council, Special Reports, Series 242. H.M.S.O.), London, 1940.

178 291 The dress of the people has changed. The men commonly wear overalls instead of the fisherman's blue jersey. Till 1919 every woman and girl wore the black petticoat striped with colours, dark blouse, often with stays, and a knitted muffler round her neck and over her head. In summer the tartan shawl was more typical of Sundays than week days (Plate IX). In clothing, a change for the worse preceded a change for the better. The abandonment of homespun, rich in wet-resisting oil, for machine-made cloth was at first a loss; but oilskins, waterproofs, and rubber boots are a surer protection to all on land or sea. For much of the year the women went barefoot but for the *osanan*, worn except in warm weather; these are stockings leaving the sole bare and kept over the foot by a band passing under the middle toes. In a wet climate with much soft ground this was a sensible custom, for wet feet, easily washed, were warm and dry as soon as the women came indoors. They moved hardily, yet a little warily, for fear of stones and, when not fatigued, with a short, springing step which was a pleasure to watch. At the same time their feet were sorely tried by rough heather or stony ground, especially when they were carrying a laden creel. Now nearly all except elderly women wear shoes (or rubbers) and stockings. They have given up the dark, striped full skirt and petticoat worn till 1919 and adopted the skirt and blouse or jumper of the towns, or the short frock so much simplified since Edwardian times. In fine weather the head is bare, though often netted because of the wind.

[369] As dress changes, it is often said that the country copies the town; the reverse were truer, in essentials. By 1914 the townswoman had begun to copy her sister in the country, seeking for common sense and simplicity; and what is true of dress may be true of other things.

827 Islanders themselves sometimes talk of a lowered
stamina and poorer health today than in the past. In-
178 breeding is widely held to account for this. Even if health
582 be really poorer, this explanation is untenable, since
marriage outside the village has greatly increased in the
166 last century. Everywhere there is movement along the
roads; a school placed half-way between two villages
[871] fosters early acquaintance; immigrants trickle in from the
mainland, and emigrants occasionally marry beyond the
Island. Moreover, the people of certain villages were
transplanted in large numbers eighty years ago, as from
143 Valtos, Uig, northward to Shawbost. In any case, in-
breeding itself does not produce degeneration; for though
it may "fix" or bring out harmful tendencies where there
is already some poor or dangerous strain, it can also fix
good characteristics in a healthy population.[1]

178 All these changes were hastened and reinforced by two
177 new, revolutionary means. First, the physical mobility
suddenly brought to an area with no railway by the motor-
166 car, van and light lorry-bus; then, towards the end of the
inter-war years, the penetration of the Gaelic-speaking
home by the ceaseless voices of broadcasting.

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[113] [1] J. A. Thomson and P. Geddes, *Life: Outlines of General Biology*, 1931, vol. i, p. 473.

CHAPTER III

THE ISLAND HOME: HOMESTEAD, TOWNSHIP AND BURGH, AND THEIR POPULATION

(A) THE LEWIS HOMESTEAD AND THE TOWNSHIP

1. *The Black House*

342 343 The 'black house' of Lewis proper contains within four walls—or rather its one continuous wall—both men and animals (Fig. 10(A)). It is the simplest surviving homestead in Western Europe. The basis of its plan, with its threefold division—for animals, for living, and for sleep—makes it not merely a house but a home [353] and steading in one, a single homestead. The basis of its plan is still found on many a Scottish croft, and Burns' cottage was built as "byre, but and ben"—a cowshed, a room 'without' and a room 'within'. In isolated cases in the Lews, however, the partitions are still low; so that one could sit on a stool by the mid-floor fire and see mother and babe, and behind them cow and calf. The scene recalls a painting of the Holy Family, but whereas Joseph the Carpenter felt his wife hard-pressed when they took refuge beside ox and ass, this primitive homestead with its quietly borne hardships has been the rule in rural Lewis until well after 1919.

As men and animals share the same roof, warmth is

342 maintained—once an important aid to the survival of half-
343 starved cattle. A slope from the dwelling-quarters down
to the byre facilitates drainage: normally the length of the
[178] homestead follows the slope. The separation of house
from byre took place in Harris and Uist over seventy years
ago by County Council decision, but in most of Lewis,
even in 1947, about 40 per cent of the homesteads were
342 of the primitive type, outwardly but little changed. This
separate cottage, as in Harris, is a shapely little structure,
roughly symmetrical and particularly pleasing when the
walls are whitewashed below the pale-gold thatch.

342 The surviving 'black house' is a stone structure. As
343 Stevens has written, "the rock of the island is hard to
[314] work, and hard to win", and may be covered by peat.
Undressed stones are collected and sometimes carried for
[324] long distances. Before dynamite came into use, a very
large stone could be broken up by lighting a peat fire on
it, then dashing cold water over it. By an old Gaelic
custom, the bachelors of a township used to help to build
the house for one of their friends who was about to marry.
[333] Lime for mortar being absent from the island, the walls
are built dry. The wall is double, the space between
being filled with earth. Hence it may be six feet thick
[354] at the base, though barely six feet high. Typical primitive
houses lacked windows, only a little light entering through
the smoke vent and through a piece of oiled skin, replaced
latterly by a pane of glass let into the thatch of the roof
or by a deep window aperture in the wall.

342 Roof building is a difficult problem in construction,
343 on account of the scarcity of timber and the strength of
the winds, and explains the narrow plan. Wood was so
313 scarce that when a house was abandoned the frame of the
[182] roof was removed, the spars being the tenant's; but in
[422]
[178]

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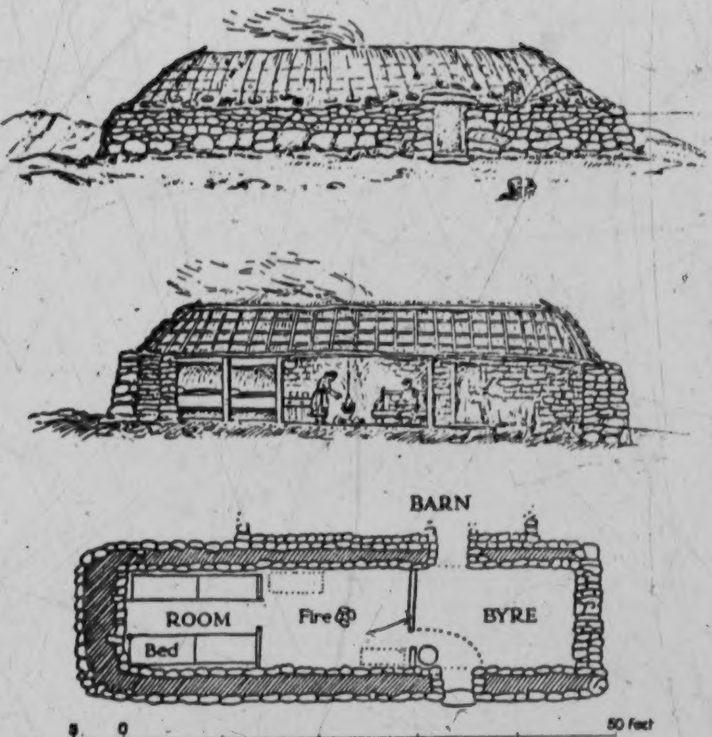
FIG. 10(A)



[178] The primitive 'Black House', universal fifty years ago in Western Lewis. Very few now have the central fire. (In Harris, byres were separated from houses about 1880.)

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FIG. 10 (B) (*facing*).—The summer shieling, past and present, and the spring house. (From the writer's field sketches, and after Thomas Curwen, L. MacDougal and D. Macdonald, Tolsta.)

A. The modern turf shieling (*àirigh*). B. The ancient beehive shieling. C. The spring house (*tigh earraich*). D. Beehive shielings added to each other to form a single mass.

/p. 80/

FIG. 10 (B)

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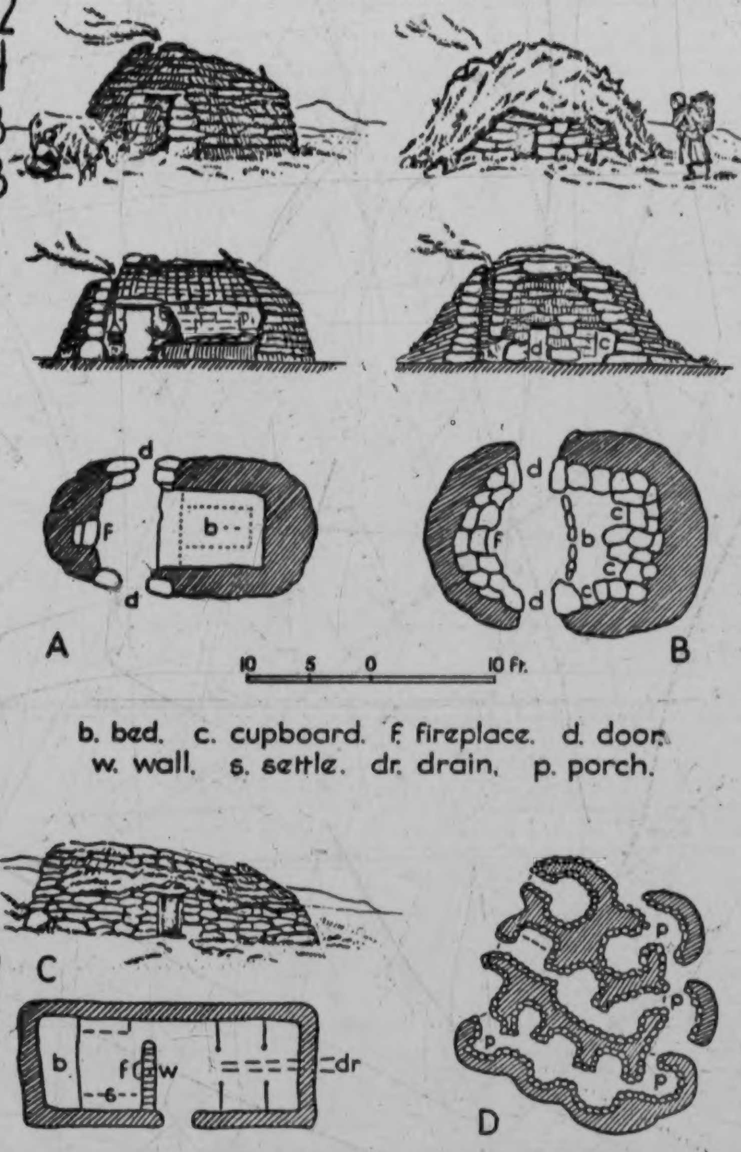
A
B
10 5 0 10 Ft.
b. bed. c. cupboard. f. fireplace. d. door.
w. wall. s. settle. dr. drain. p. porch.
b
c
f
d
s
w
dr
p
C
D
5 0 30 ft.
0 20 ft.
I.L.H.-G

[361]
←

342 later times the landlord might supply timber. Long
343 ago a main source of timber was the shore. The length
[313] of the house may be fifty to sixty feet, and the inside
breadth ten to twelve feet, spanned by ten or a dozen
[422] pairs of couples on which are laid transverse 'cabers',
[178] which may be tree trunks, branches, odd wood, old oars,
or, exceptionally, sawn timber. The tops of the walls are
353 finished with turf, to keep the filling from being washed
out, and to provide a smooth bearing for the couples, the
ends of which are pushed into the turf so as to bear on
the inner half of the wall; the rounded form and absence
of overhanging eaves prevent a gale obtaining purchase
on the roof, but a gable with chimney is now usual on the
356 end wall of the inner room. The rafters are annually
covered with turf, and the roof is thatched with thin, short
barley straw, which was pulled up, not cut, after the ears
were picked off, the roots gripping well, and the stem
hanging outward and down.

353 The door gives direct access to the byre (*bathach*), through which one reaches the middle part, or living-room, 'at the fire' (*aig an teine*), from which there opens the inmost part, the 'room' with bed-closets. There is no ceiling to the primitive house, the row of box beds having tops to keep off the drips of rain water. In the middle of the earthen, sanded floor of the living-room is the circular hearth, built of stones with clay between, and raised a few inches, with no chimney.

343 In the byre, the manure accumulates from spring to
spring, and a breach is made in the end of the house for
the annual removal of the manure. There are no privies.
Where there is fodder and straw in any quantity a barn
342 is added. Stacks are rare because of wind. A low wall,
343 continuous with the house and barn, may enclose the kale-

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342 yard and occasionally a barley-kiln in which to dry grain
343 before malting it for home-brewed beer. A ' black mill ',
351 with its primitive horizontal water-wheel, stands apart by
[251] some burnside.

[273] Round the circular hearth, a large company can assemble
in very social fashion for talk, story and song, the meeting
354 *together* (*ceilidh*). By the transfer of the hearth from the
571 centre and the substitution of a gable fireplace and regular
538 chimney, the social circle is halved, while meantime the
tales of the *ceilidh* are forbidden or forgotten. Happily
[178] the bench still stands against the wall, near to the open
[353] door, through which neighbours slip in with a word of
greeting to find a customary welcome.

342 The dwellings on the summer pastures out on the
moors show great variety, illustrated in Fig. 10(B). A simple
361 type in use is built of turf and stones, lightly roofed with
[178] turf placed on spars. A more primitive ' beehive ' type
(which fell out of use before 1900) was stone-built and
[171] corbelled, probably for lack of timber. And whereas the
lighter type always stands by itself, the corbelled type was
added to until a dozen cells formed a single mass, suggestive
of ancient ' neolithic ' hamlets as at Skara Brae in Orkney,
described by Childe, and of the domed, corbelled huts of
the ancient East.

[343] A further type was the ' spring house ' of Tolsta, NE.
Lewis, in which both cattle and folk sheltered in spring a
little way from the village, before going out to the more
[124] distant moor. Mr. Donald Macdonald, F.R.S.G.S., a
native of Tolsta, informs me that the spring house was in
[178] use until 1936. He remembers vividly how life in the
shieling restored health and colour after the winter.

2. *From Black House to White House*

342 Discontent with the old black house grew with the
177 knowledge and experience of better housing in Stornoway
178 and on the mainland. The congestion which developed
during the nineteenth century meant that often one house
175 was fouled by another above it, leading to typhoid epidemics.
342 While the smoky atmosphere of the 'black
houses' inflamed the eyes and irritated the respiratory
161 system, the roof was high and the fire kept the air in
164 motion by day, ventilating it to the chimney hole, while
the lack of glass often made it necessary to work with the
[354] door open. The ravages of tuberculosis came towards the
end of the nineteenth century, when Islanders went to our
crowded towns and, not being immunised, were dangerously
infected. Returning home, too often to linger and
die in a house now provided with tiny, fixed panes which
permitted a closed door and made it stuffier than before,
178 patients spread infection. Flight to a tiny, air-tight
wooden cabin or to a small white house of stone and lime
342 often followed. The availability for the first time of planks
[313] and timber, a certain practice in boat-repairing, and possibly
acquaintance at first- or second-hand with Canadian
[177] wooden houses, may have influenced the choice of wood.
The early 'white' houses, with an attic lit by skylight,
were airtight, for the windows were too often fixed or only
[354] opened at the bottom. The door was left open in warm
weather, but it was not high enough to allow the escape
of the stale, upper layer of air which the women breathed
as they did their cooking and baking.

342 In the inter-war period, particularly in its last decade,
746 the 'black house' was being abandoned, not for something
178 worse, but far better. The Government-aided houses have

656

342 adequate air-space, and windows opening at the top and
746 usually kept open by day, in which a woman can work at
178 ease. The Department of Agriculture aided the building
656 of a good standard type. The quality of joinery and
masonry or concrete work improved, one fairly skilled
[335] workman usually directing the householder and friends as
amateur builders. The cost of materials was met by a
[333] grant, generally of £250, half being repayable by an annual
rent of £6 : 10s. for twenty years. Repayments proceeded
satisfactorily. No scheme organised by the Department
of Agriculture for Scotland won so general a commendation
as this of house improvement. It made good use of
family initiative and responsibility, with neighbourly cooperation
not called for upon a large scale, a township at
a time, but in quite a small, personal way. Nevertheless,
had more guidance been provided to the builders, the
[464] houses could have been really well built. For lack of this,
perhaps, crofters increasingly prefer to pay for skilled
work, though helping actively. Appendces I (ii) and II (ii)
gives pre-War and post-War statistics.

3. *The Township and its Changing Plan*

361 Where absence of rock and boulder permits ploughing,
[182] the village land is laid out in a series of parallel strips,
aligned with the slope. The road runs either parallel
[491] with shore or river, or at right angles to it. The intermixed
possession of strips by 'run-rig' characterised
the Lowlands before the Enclosures, and is frequent in
[423] the Highlands and Isles. The apparent regularisation of
field lines may conceal the fact that an individual holder's
plots may be scattered amongst those of others in fixed
[182] run-rig. This is an advantage where quality of land is so
patchy, and each man thus gets his share of good and bad

361 luck in land, but a disadvantage where control of a single
[423] area is desired by one man. Regularisation of roads,
[182] houses and holdings is relatively modern, for crofts and
dwellings were once grouped in hamlets usually close to
[172] the seashore. The early hamlets can still be made out
from their ruins among the rocks, sometimes sketched in
the 'six inch to mile' Ordnance Survey plans. They were
without formal order or arrangement, each homestead
within its boundary wall. Where ploughing was and is too
difficult, the soil is heaped up in ridges, 'lazy-beds', and dug.

361 Shawbost, on a rocky part of the west coast (six miles
491 south of Barvas) consists of three main sections: a scatter
of houses and ruins by the enclosed loch, two main streets
linking the loch to the main coastal road, and inland another
short street. The three can be made out on a 'quarter-
[175] inch' map. The two main streets were laid out by the
Estate Officers following removals in the mid-nineteenth
[311] century from another part of the island, Uig, and the third
running inland was laid out still later, when population was
growing and land was needed. When the third street was
laid out, the landlord, Matheson, lent good plough-horses
for preliminary reclamation. The irregularly placed black
houses near the sea are tending to be rebuilt close to the
main road.

361 In addition to this type of movement, farms 'broken
178 up' once more into crofts have been laid out on a regular
grid plan, each house placed on a corner of its five, ten,
311 or twenty-acre plot (*e.g.* Galson, Dalebeg, etc.). 'Skinned'
[654] land may also be reclaimed for crofts by squatters tolerated
by the community, or on a regular grid by agreement of the
assembled crofters, guided by the Department of Agri-
[491] culture. Thus two distinct tendencies are seen: the grid
plan in new settlements, road alinement in existing ones.

361 The chief advantage of moving uphill to the road has been
178 ease of communication and access to grocers' vans and mill-
311 spinners' lorries; but the disadvantage proves to be the
491 laying on of running water. A much-needed scheme for
water supply is now being applied by the Department of
[654] Health for Scotland. Scrutiny of a 'quarter-inch' map
will indicate the chief facts and tendencies and the conditions they involve.

4. *Distribution of Population*

162 The distribution of rural population can be closely
311 estimated by inspection of a 'quarter-inch' map, where both the area of cultivation and the house dots are noted. Comparison with parish populations shows that on an average one dot represents seven or eight houses or families and thirty to thirty-five persons. Since there are now no large farms, cultivation indicates crofting, and, therefore, a typical density of one person to a little over half an acre, or 1000–1200 per square mile. Rural numbers over the whole Island show a density of about twenty-five persons per square mile. If the fishing grounds, with a sail here and there on the wide sea, were added, the density would be lower still! A single dot found with cultivation indicates crofts, which are hardly ever found singly. Where no cultivation is shown around a single dot, this generally indicates an isolated stalker's house, a shooting lodge by a road, or a shieling (*àirigh*) out on the moor.

(B) STORNOWAY

1. *Site, Plan and Development*

361 The plan of Stornoway and its harbour shows three stages in the growth of the town, the first two picked out

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 89]

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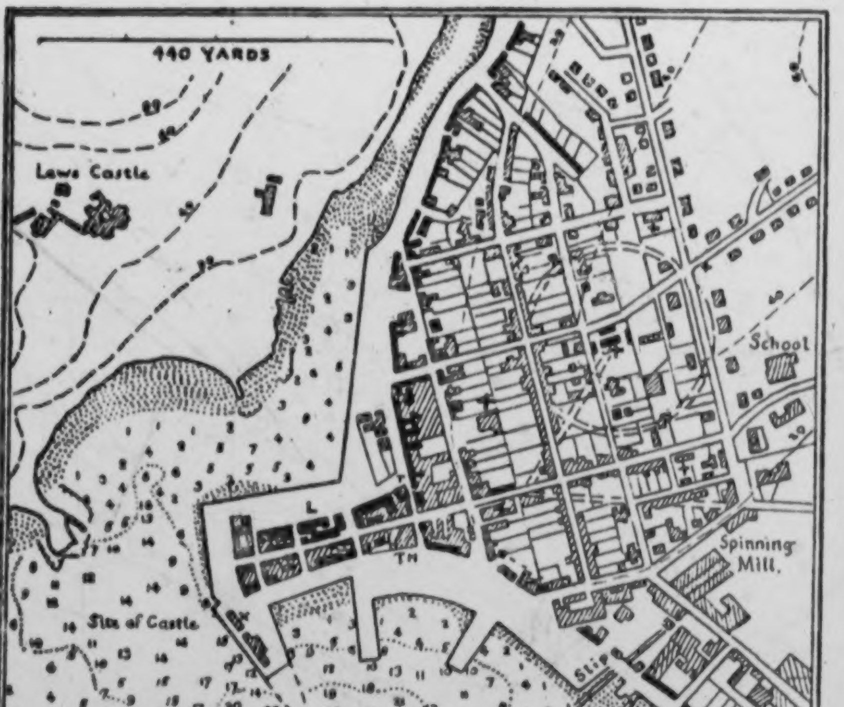
440 YARDS
Lews Castle
School
L
TH
Spinning Mill.
Site of Castle
Slip
Proposed Wharf
Proposed Jetty
GOAT I.

FIG. 11.—Plan of Stornoway and its Development (*key opposite*).

361 in solid black, and the third in hatching (Fig. 11). First,
174 upon the little peninsula or 'Point' which protects the
inner fishing harbour of the river there grew the nucleus
361 of the town, with its Castle upon the rocky islet now con-
226 cealed by the steamer pier. Sheltered from the waves by
the peninsula and from enemies by the Castle, MacLeod's
504 galleys and the early fishing fleet must have congregated
in the inner harbour. Protection from storm was specially
needed until, in the nineteenth century, a quay was built,
with space for marketing and handling the herring.

174 Inland from the Castle was the little church of the burgh,
361 dedicated to Saint Lennan (L). The little town can be
imagined stretching inland from the church, its dwellings
[346] built along the 'Point Street' axis, until it met the track,
road or street crossing the neck of the Point. The largest
church of Lewis proper, now in ruins, stood apart from
the burgh, at the south-west extremity of Eye Peninsula.
Until trade developed, the backs of the houses would have
been turned to the shore. To north, on the landward
side from which cattle would come, the market developed.

175 Secondly, in the seventeenth century, thatched houses
361 were strung out along Point Street and the shore for the
Gaelic settlers, the fisher- and craftsman-crofters brought
342 here to found a burgh and commercialise fishing. During

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102 *Key to Fig. 11* (opposite)

361 Buildings on John Wood's plan of 1821 are shown in black and radial streets then proposed by pecked lines. Existing buildings are
174 shown hatched. The harbour development plan of 1946 (pecked lines) is shown by courtesy of the Stornoway Pier and Harbour Commission; it is now in execution.

L = site of St. Lennan's. T = former Town House. TH = Town House.
× = site of Castle. + = modern churches.

(Based on a British Admiralty chart with the permission of the Controller o, H.M. Stationery Office and of the Hydrographer of the Navy.)

175 the eighteenth century these 'black houses' would be
342 replaced by houses of stone and lime, and a few of those
361 survive.

Of the fort built by Cromwell on the Point, no signs
172 remain. For tactical reasons, the best site would seem
174 to be the neck of the Point, from which the guns of the
fort could defend the houses, stores and quays. The
712 irregular building line near the point marked T, a
Town House at a later period, may correspond to the
175 northern angle of the fort. The fort appears to have been
standing when the original drawing was made for the
712 engraving in the Old (or First) Statistical Account of
Stornoway, *c.* 1793.

175 By the time Wood drew his plan in 1820, houses on
the Point no longer looked exclusively on to the axial
361 street. The main alinement of interest came to be the
shore, marked by a properly built quay. Today, the Point
Street houses have fallen into decay but many older houses
still stand in fair repair along the 'Beach' or Quay.

175 Thirdly, from the nineteenth century, until 1914, two-
storey, flatted tenements, hotels and houses of middle-class
361 people were built upon a grid that followed upon the old
34 field plans. In an alternative plan, proposed about 1820
but not adopted, a diagonal vista opened out to the Established Church, built in 1794 on rising ground. The
modest Seaforth Lodge which had stood across the harbour
was replaced in 1850 by Stornoway (or Lews) Castle, its
pseudo-Tudor style designed to please the new improving
landlord, Sir James Matheson, who had purchased Lewis
in 1844. Presented to the people on the break-up of the
Leverhulme Estates in 1925, a new technical school has
175 taken it over. A few villas also grew up on outlying roads.
361
162 Thus, a mere village in 1801, and among the smaller burghs
226

175 of Ross and Cromarty, with populations of from 1000 to
361 2300 in 1841, Stornoway leapt ahead by 1851, growing
162 with the rise of the fishing trade. Including the literally
226 floating population of fishers, its numbers exceeded 4000
in the summer of 1921, though falling below this in 1931
when the census was held in the spring.

175 Still another stage, a fourth, seemed in sight when, in
228 1918, the first Lord Leverhulme made his bid to centralise
the scattered, failing fishing industry of the Island at
361 Stornoway. A canning factory was started (south of the area shown on the plan), only to be dismantled before its completion, then recommenced and again dismantled at "Leverburgh", South Harris. New housing commenced. When this great venture closed and population stagnated, the grandiose proposal to reopen the diagonal vista on Wood's plan and centre it on some great new building, remained a dream. The failure of Leverhulme's great enterprise and its hopes led to discouragement for some years. Yet it is possible that the vision of change given to the Island may have contributed to a renewed capacity for enterprise, individual and communal.

175 Later extension had to await the growth of the Harris
361 tweed industry, and the erection of spinning-mills to
provide yarn for the rural hand-weavers. The town has
[288] extended beyond the plan in two main directions: to north-east with villas and housing schemes and to ESE. with the great new mills where kippering sheds were numerous from the mid-nineteenth century until after 1919.

361 Although Tarbert is a shopping centre for Harris and
366 has its spinning-mill, Stornoway has no rival on the
Island. The adequate depth of its harbour, combined
[162] with its position and access from sea and land, have given

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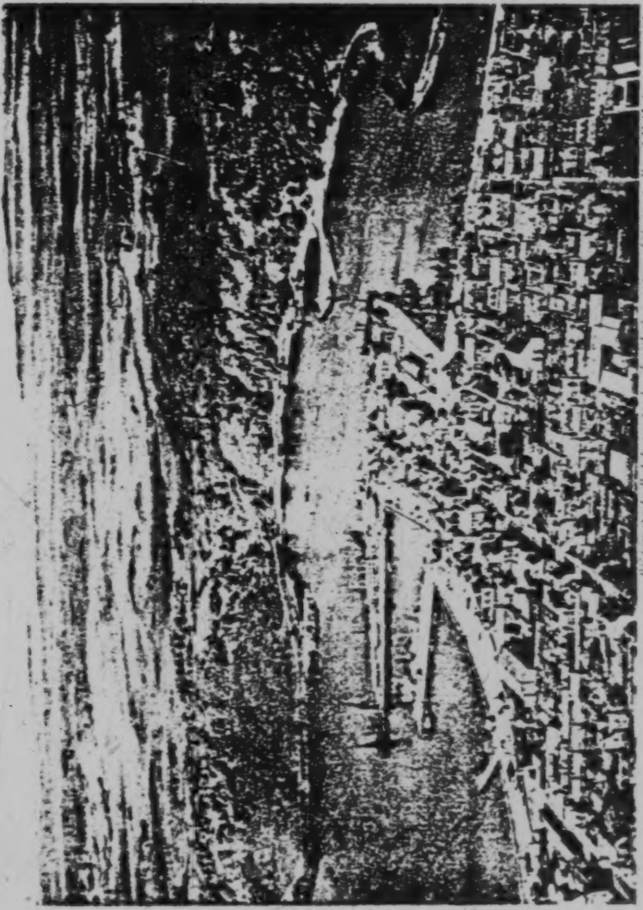

Photograph by R.A.F.; reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office

PLATE XI. AIR VIEW OVER STORNOWAY HARBOUR, LOOKING SOUTH TO HARRIS

The original central street of the Point can be seen (cf. Plate II and Fig. 12). The woods of Lews Castle lie across the Bay, with Arnish Moor beyond

/facing p. 92/

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PLATE XII. A MOTHER AND CHILD AT TARBERT, HARRIS

/facing p. 93/

369 of the place, even the schoolmaster and ministers being 632 mostly Islanders, in Stornoway an important minority of the officials and business men hail from the mainland, and some of them from the Lowlands. New blood has undoubtedly been needed to promote enterprise, to foresee new possibilities, and even, at times, to make the best of the past. At the same time, the cleavage between town and country is marked in ways of thought and feeling as in 369 livelihood. To take a single criterion, that of speech, most 632 of the children of the town speak no Gaelic and many 197 hardly understand it. While the percentage of Gaelic speakers was 95 in the three outlying parishes in 1931, in the burgh only 70 per cent could still speak the old tongue. By 1951 the ratio, still almost unchanged in the outlying parishes and townships, had considerably lowered in the burgh.

369 The attempt to harmonise the interests of country and 632 town forms a hopeful aspect of the activities both of the Stornoway Trust, which holds the rural and urban property [656] presented to the people of Stornoway parish by the first [427] Lord Leverhulme, and of the Lewis Association, formed in 1943 to undertake studies of the Island to guide action [654] for the future. The maintenance of the town's prosperity will depend greatly upon its industries of fishing and of [228] spinning; and these are almost inseparable from the [288] maintenance of the rural population for whom Stornoway acts as regional centre, and who weave with the yarn spun in the mills. Unity in constructive purpose could go far to build up the prosperity of the community.

361 With the recognition of the need for planning aroused 369 by the problems which faced the country with the return 632 of peace, it is proposed, at the centre of the Burgh, to rebuild the whole of the peninsular area of Point Street,

361 by co-operation of three authorities: the Town Council,
369 the Piers and Harbour Commission, and the Stornoway
632 Trust as owner of property, including Lews Castle with
its grounds. The social situation is of quite exceptional
[656] interest, and an attempt to describe some of its features is
[654] made in Appendix II, on the Stornoway Trust and the
Lewis Association.

(c) CHANGES IN ISLAND POPULATION, AND THE FUTURE

I. *From 1801 to 1939*

175 Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the growth
162 of population was periodically checked or even set back by
famines and epidemics, such as smallpox, or by warfare.
[731] In 1801 the total population of the Outer Hebrides (in
round numbers) was 21,700, and in 1831 it was 32,000.
Of this total, Lewis carried 9200 and Harris 3000 in 1801
and, a generation later, in 1831, respectively 14,500 and
3900. In the graph (Fig. 12) the curve showing the
average for the five landward or rural parishes of the
Island (excluding Stornoway Burgh) indicates the fairly
steady numerical increase there, almost to the close of the
[731] century. Following the evictions after 1831 and the potato
famine of 1846–48, emigration caused a fall in the southern
islands (*e.g.* in South Uist, Fig. 12). Forty years later, in
1871, the Outer Hebridean total reached nearly 40,000,
of which Lewis alone, with 21,000, now gave more than
half the total, and Harris—in spite of an intervening drop
owing to evictions—4800. By 1901, in spite of losses in
the southern isles, the total for the Outer Hebrides reached
a peak of 46,200. Of this, Lewis already contributed almost

175 29,000 and Harris 5270. From 1901 to 1911 rural growth
162 slowed down and ceased thereafter; but even by 1921 there had been little change (rural Lewis, 28,380; Harris, 5280).

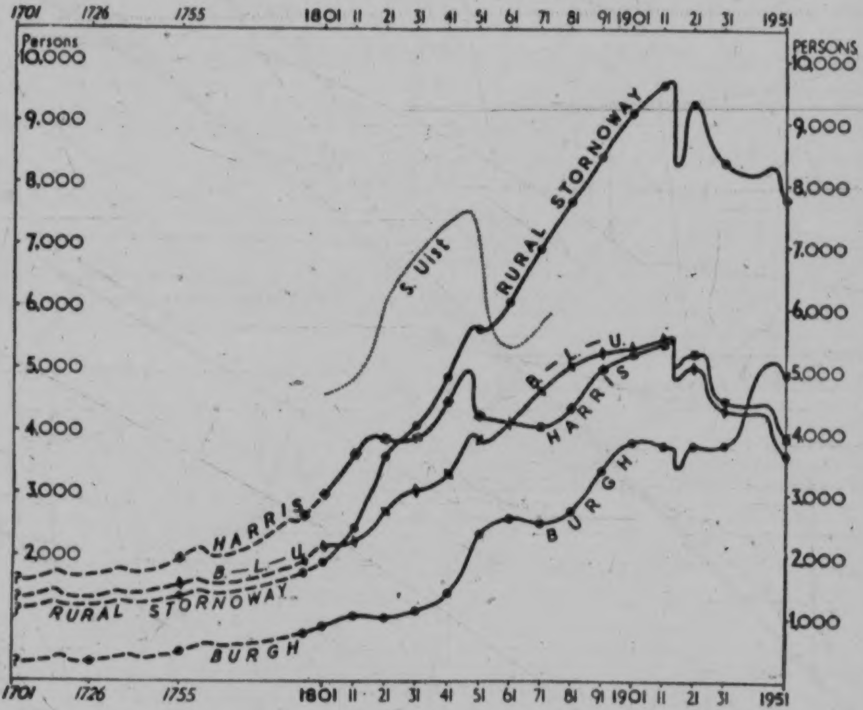

FIG. 12.—Graph showing changes of population in Lewis-and-Harris from *c.* 1701 to 1951. (Because of boundary changes the curves for the parishes of Barvas, Lochs and Uig have been averaged and are shown as B.-L.-U.)

167 The great exodus from the Island came three years after, in 1924–25, when Leverhulme's expenditure, on labouring wages was over, the war bounties had been spent —partly upon the refitting of boats—and when fishing was hard hit by the destruction of the Russian market. Simultaneously, a wet summer spoiled the crops and prevented even the drying of the peats.

167 Emigration set in, both individually and by help of schemes for group settlement in Canada, and in 1931 rural [162] Lewis returned only 21,200 and Harris 4500. The curve of average parish increase illustrates the fairly steady numerical increase to the close of the last century, then the lessening increase, and after 1921 a fall, recorded in 1931.

162 The census of April 1951, which recorded the population of Stornoway burgh as nearly 5000 (a net increase of 16 per cent since April 1931), recorded little or no change in the population of rural Stornoway parish but losses of 11 to 19 per cent in the Island's four outlying parishes. The average net rural loss approached 9 per cent. But—as indicated in the curves drawn for Fig. 12 which are based upon statistical estimates that corroborate observation—the loss did not take place smoothly over the twenty-year period to 1951. Much of the loss occurred in the two preceding years, 1949 to 1951. Although partly due to a long term trend, this loss was greatly caused by crisis.

2. *Present Population Trends and the Outlook*

167 After 1931, as a result of the trade depression in the Empire and the United States, many emigrants returned, frequently putting what was left of their savings into the purchase of a loom, giving some months to the building of a new house with the help of Government loans, and setting about the improvement of their parents' holding [162] or the reclamation of a new allotment. Soon after 1931—at a time when the Press read the census results as a portent [168] of steady and drastic Island depopulation—Islanders remarked that unless unexpected attraction came from outside the Island, accompanied by lessened prosperity in

162 weaving and fishing, the fall in population would probably
[167] be small, if any, in 1941. This fall in the total figure was
not so much a decrease in the number of families as in the
[168] number per family. The Island was only then following
the restriction of population begun half a century before
in the rest of Protestant Britain, though the causes, social
and economic, are very dissimilar. Actually, little did
occur to change either the rural situation or that of
Stornoway, until the outbreak of war in 1939.

162 Since 1931 there had been no real decrease: Lewis is
178 a land of house-building, not of ruin and abandonment;
of increase of holdings, not diminution, and even of agri-
369 cultural improvement. No doubt 'artificial' causes were
[657] at work: first, loans, grants and unemployment insurance
and assistance—once known as 'the dole'—and, secondly,
[593] the money sent to elderly parents and dependants at home
by young folk in Glasgow or abroad, or savings brought
[888] back by the young people themselves. Yet there is some
[226] fishing and agriculture still. Above all, 'hand-weaving'
has grown, even if this be partly 'artificial'. Recently it
[241] was not only the elders who had returned to the Island, but
[286] men and women in the prime of life, so that the question
of resources, livelihood and population in Lewis needs to
be re-examined afresh.

167 The emigration which took place from 1949 to 1951
[464] followed directly upon the losses and the unemployment
in the Island's Harris tweed industry. This crisis resulted
[651] from the imposition in 1949 of a Purchase Tax on hand-
woven Harris tweed of 666 per cent. If the tax had been
[162] maintained and no adequate adjustment made, the effects
on population would have been far-reaching.

3. *Age-Groups in Scotland and the Isles*

162 In Fig. 13 (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*) are shown four pyramids of population for comparison of an 'ideal' or theoretical projection in Scotland with the actual age-groups in rural or 'landward' Lewis and all Scotland in 1931 and 1951.[1]

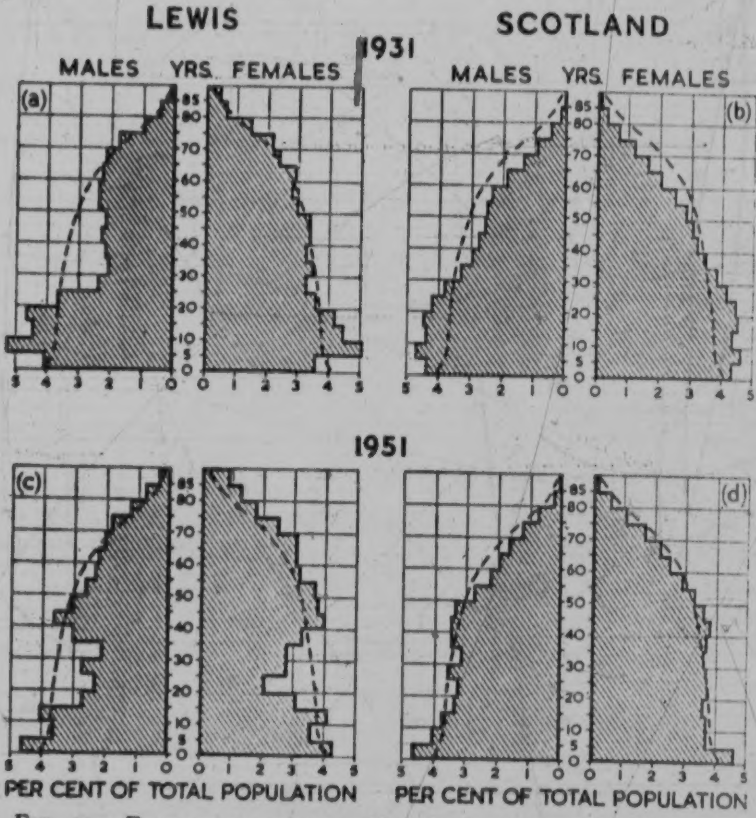

FIG. 13.—Four age-group pyramids. Each of the four, five-yearly age-groupings (in black) may be compared with the 'ideal' age-grouping (broken line).

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16 [1] The 'ideal' pyramid (drawn from Scottish Life Tables) represents a population, unaffected by migration, of which the birth and death rates for each age-group in Scotland are as in 1931. Since 1931 health in Scotland

16 In the pyramid for rural Lewis (b) the differences are
striking, and are mainly due to two factors: the 'natural'
162 ratio of births to deaths, and migration. Beginning from
the bottom of the pyramid, it will be seen that in 1931
there were fewer infants (from 0–5 years) than children
from 5–10 years, fewer in fact than in the three older age-groups. In 1951 (c), the birth rate having risen sharply
after the war and preceding depression, infants formed a
much larger ratio (over 5 per cent).

162 In rural Lewis, emigration asserted itself earliest with
167 girls, as they left the Island chiefly for domestic service;
but soon after the age of 20 as many young men left as
young women. In 1931 the discrepancy was most marked
[165] from the age of 30 to 35. This was further accentuated
by the heavy death-roll among the younger men during
[727] the 1914–18 war, deaths having totalled more than 1100,
perhaps the heaviest proportionate loss in the Empire.
Only when they marry and return, permanently or for a
period, to the croft (vacated it may be by the death of a
parent), do the numbers of men tend to balance those of
women. Thereafter the falling away among men is due
to their shorter life expectation.

16 In 1951 National Service had drawn away lads of 18 to 20, so that the difference between the sexes is much less marked in the 15–19 age-group than it was in 1931. Mortality in the 1914–18 war contributes to the shortage of men between 50 and 55 in 1951, and the mortality of the 1939–45 war has also left its trace—or the birth rate would have been still higher (always excluding the factor of migration). For the men, those jobs not requiring per-

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has improved, but detailed analytical statistics for 1951 were not available by 1954. Allowances being made for the effects of the wars, for the high ratio of births immediately after, and for emigration from Lewis after 1949, the age-grouping in the island changed but little from 1931.

16 manent absence from the Island are chiefly the Merchant Service and hydro-electric contracts, and for the women hotel and domestic service, nursing and fish-curing. The ultimate return of many men after prolonged absence contributes to the higher proportion of men of retired and pensionable age (16 per cent in rural Lewis, 11 in Stornoway and 10 in Scotland). What could not be shown on either pyramid for Lewis is the high ratio of unmarried women, owing to the losses of the war, to migration, and to the need for a daughter to devote herself to ageing parents on the croft. The ratio of widows, with or without children, is also considerable, for all three reasons, as well as a fourth, the desirability for an island home, rather than a city, as a place in which to bring up fatherless children.

Turning now to Scotland (b) (d), the same tendencies [177] are seen as in Lewis, though in less extreme form. The difference is of quantity rather than of kind: somewhat as Lewis had lost her men to Scotland mainly, so Scotland [171] had lost to England and beyond. On an average, mothers in Lewis have more children than mothers in Scotland, and still more so than in England. Thus the facts of population in the Island do not suggest a voluntary extinction of its community, but rather the will to live.

5

PART TWO

000 COMMUNITY FROM PAST TO PRESENT

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623 of the Norsemen, lay a succession of earlier periods. A phase of primitive settlements is traceable in archaeo-
172 logical remains and in recent and contemporary survivals.
174 It is shown in the physical race-traits distinguishing those in one part of the Island from those in another. Fragments of tradition telling of the first Christian missionaries survived the Norse invasions and settlements, dated from A.D. 800 or before, down to Haco's defeat on the Clyde at Largs in 1256. These fragments can be linked to chronicles and to later tradition, on which they throw fresh light.

[144] A survey of the archaeology has been published,[1] but comparatively little, as yet, on race. Yet different communities are distinguished by marked racial types or strains. Although many, indeed most, of the race-strains of the Island must have entered it in prehistoric times, some are linked to tradition, and history accounts for the more
[141] recent immigrants. The striking element of race in the Outer Hebrides is a broad-headed type prevailing from Barra to the Lews, accompanied by medium stature and dark hair; it is also found across the Northern Minch. But within the Island are notable differences.

829 Variety of race being accentuated by difference in ways, the communities still comment pointedly upon one
[538] another! For instance, an old saying is not forgotten: "The folk of Cladach, but the gentlemen of Uig!" (*Muinntir a' Chladaich, ach daoin' uasaile Uig*),
[433] 'Cladach' being the western 'Beach' district possessing
[632] ploughland but poor fishing, which covers the modern
[133] parish of Barvas (excluding the north-west cliff-promontory

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[113] [1] Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, *Outer Hebrides, Skye etc.*); 1928. V. G. Childe, *The Prehistory of Scotland*, 1935; *Scotland Before the Scots*, 1946.

829 of Ness), while Uig is the most westerly promontory with
[433] its natural fishing harbours. The authorship of the proverb
[632] may be ascribed to the ladies and gentlemen of Uig;
[133] yet the personal appearance of the victims, who are more
broad-headed, gives the proverb a physical foundation.
174 Again, the tall men of Ness, dark or fair, and rather longer-headed,
172 still form a group apart from those of Cladach,
each having taken root in prehistory, *i.e.* earlier than
141 surviving record.

144 Such facts correct several current misconceptions as to race and heredity in their relation to Gaelic society, past and possible. First, it is still common to contrast a 'Celtic' with a 'Norse race'. Now, Norse immigrants belonged to several races, and when they arrived, several race-streams were already mixing and eddying in the Isles. After the immigration of Norsemen, the next recorded was in 1611, consisting of gentlemen-tacksmen from Kintail and burghal settlers to Stornoway, who were composed of Gaelic-speaking families from Easter Ross, where the people of today resemble some Scandinavian types rather than typical broad-headed Lewismen.

Second, it follows that no sweeping generalisations can yet be made as to the ways and habits of particular races. The "Celtic race", one reads, have "never taken to the sea" as have the Norsemen.[1] The facts in the Island are that though the men of Ness, with a possible Norse admixture, were considered better fishermen than those of Cladach, and the present generation includes a great number of seamen, their opportunities have been greater — their cape commanding wider fishing grounds and their little port providing relative safety in storm. And the men of Lochs and of the 'Bays' of Harris, though they show

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[1] For example, in the Brand Report on Lewis (1902).

141
144 little sign of Norse blood, can hold their own as fishers with
172 the men of Ness.

174 Third, it is still commonly stated not only that the "great majority" under the clan system were "without
174 any legal status", but that their tenure "depended on the
[613] good will of the chief or tacksman".[1]

As the last lawbooks of the Gael were taken from Lewis
174 by its first mainland lord in 1611—never to be heard of
675 again—it may well be that, as recognised in the Northern Isles, so in the Western Isles, peasant tenure was perma-
[175] nent according to regional law. In practice, mere 'goodwill' is so uncertain a quantity that if this statement had been true, it is hardly credible that communities could have remained so stably rooted as their race-types show them to be. Evictions of groups or individuals at the whim of chief or tacksman would have broken down their
[178] homogeneity of race. In the Lowlands, where eviction had become so frequent by 1500 and insecurity for the
[184] mass of the country people has prevailed ever since, such localisations of race would be unthinkable and do not exist except in certain fishing communities who possess a pride, almost a caste-code, of their own: the Newhaven fishers within Edinburgh remain apart, with a dialect and a dress of their own. Great stability of tenure—in fact as in customary claim—is shown by the racial homogeneity of Gaelic communities.

174 Lastly, it is common to state that the nobility and gentry of a countryside constitute its 'old' or 'original' families. It is true that some land-owning families seem 'old' compared to recent purchasers—successively the merchants and lawyers, venturers and planters of the

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[113] [1] From a representative report on the Highlands and Islands, that of the Scottish Economic Committee, 1938 (Historical Preface, p. 9).

174 Commercial Revolution, and the manufacturers and financiers of the later Industrial Revolution. Along one or more lines, the chiefs may record a thread of ancestry continuing for twenty-five generations or more; but almost invariably it is intertwined with others spun by fortune and added at each generation from outside the region. This is true even in the Highlands, where the gentry of one or two particular clans used to meet regularly until the nineteenth century to court and wed, so that inter-marriage established physical traits still recognisable in their descendants. But as for the nobility or leading chiefs, their principal claims go back, almost invariably, to conquerors, Norse or Norman, and later, alien commanders sent by the Crown, although certain chiefs traditionally claim descent—at least through the maternal line—from legendary heroes and early Gaelic kings, a claim which may symbolise a real link with native strains. As for the people, in the Scottish Lowlands few original communities survive. But particularly in the Long Island, the long pedigrees of the crofter families show them to be pure in every thread for generations past; while the racial homogeneity of communities, isle by isle and township by township, marks them as truly ' original '.

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174 These facts have been recognised by anthropology, but too often the full, cultural significance is missed. Sixty years ago Sir G. L. Gomme included evidence from Harris in 1790, and from Carmichael's memoranda to the Crofters' Commission of 1884, in his pioneer study, *The Village Community, with special reference to the Origin and Form of its Survivals in Britain* (1890). Gomme fully appreciated the ancient origins of custom and races. Indeed he shows analogies of primitive communal customs in the Hebrides and Britain with others of ' backward ' pre-Aryan

114 aborigines in India—lovable people when unspoiled by 174 tyranny, caste or industrial exploitation, as I can testify.[1] Yet Gomme, like many since, leaves the reader with an impression which must be re-examined: that the Islesfolk are the representatives of a backward race who have clung to predominantly superstitious, pre-Christian customs and beliefs. As a people, the Gael received and welcomed Christianity in one of its earliest historic forms, and main- [128] tained its spirit through poverty and famine. To this inheritance we shall turn in Chapter VII, when the rhythm of life and its changes have been followed out in the following chapters.

174 To begin with, the briefest outline of historic sequence 613 is all that can be recapitulated, the Island annals having been recorded in the excellent Brand Report (1902), and [114] by W. C. Mackenzie (1903 to 1937). Politically and strategically, the age of clanship may be thought of as a period of struggle between the Islands and the Mainland [175] to the south or east. The long-drawn conflict of Clan Campbell of Argyll with Clan Donald—whose Chief was the Lord of the Isles of which Islay and Skye were the two dominant, western keys, and Lewis and Harris the northern outposts—offers a parallel to the conflict of MacKenzie of Kintail with the last MacLeods of Lewis. Obscurity veils the early origins of the Island clans, with their mingled Norse and Gaelic lineage, but chronicles are more reliable by the time of forfeiture of the lordship of the Isles to the Crown in 1493. The MacLeods of Dunvegan, chiefs in north-west Skye, continued to hold Harris until late in the eighteenth century, and they maintained an indirect connection until the nineteenth.

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[113] [1] A. Geddes, *Au pays de Tagore: la civilisation rurale du Bengale Occidental*, Paris, 1927.

174 But the last MacLeods of Lewis, torn by family dissensions,
613 fell fighting before the power of King James VI (and I),
who backed the 'capitalist' fishery enterprise of 'the
[175] Fife Adventurers'. Although these were routed by
the Islanders, a Highland lord and chief, MacKenzie
of Kintail, received Lewis from the Crown in 1611,
taking his title from Loch Seaforth, near which he had
built his Lewis hunting-lodge. Except for a period
of forfeiture after 1715, the Seaforth family held the Island
until its purchase by a wealthy and beneficent tea merchant,
Matheson, in 1844. From Seaforth's tenure and the
Papers of the Forfeited Estates are left records of ancient
life and of the introduction of changes, temporal and
[178] spiritual. These are reviewed in the next five chapters.
Chapter X brings the Island story to the year 1953, and its
prospects.

CHAPTER V

FAMILY, FARM GROUP AND TOWNSHIP: THE CONTINUING COMMUNITY AND ITS SOCIAL ECONOMY TO 1815

I

INTRODUCTION (TO CHAPTERS V AND VI)

121 THE family, the ‘conjoint’ or ‘farm group’ of
593 four or five families, and the larger group clustered
476 in a glen or along a shoreland, are, in ascending
order, the three concentric units whose mutual relation-
632 ships we must visualise to understand the past. Enduring
621 elements of life in family and neighbourhood today, with
their own special qualities and limitations, can only be
understood in terms of past needs and the relationships
they evoked.

121 Having seen their relationships in family, team and
613 township, we can next turn to the reciprocal relations of
the people to their chief or lord, whose position dominates
621 European, indeed world, history and prehistory. Here
[171] our concern must be the meaning of ‘clanship’ to the
chiefs, the joint farm-groups (or ‘small tenantry’) and,
latterly, the tacksmen placed above them.

121 We may find, throughout this study, that features and
174 functions which at first sight seem peculiar to the Island
are really local variants, more perfectly crystallised, of
178 forms which we know existed at earlier periods in Scotland
[184] and in much of northern and western Britain. In the Isles,

121 by help of oral tradition and of the living witness of con-
174 tinuing usage, we can reconstitute Gaelic life from the
view-points of both people and chief. Elsewhere, even in
178 Scotland, only fragments of early life are recorded, in
175 parchments written by the lawyers of landlord and king,
and almost always from the privileged side. History is
814 indebted to modern lawyers who have deciphered and
127 published the faded documents of their predecessors. But
the very training as solicitor-factors which fitted them for
this specialised task, in no way prepared them to view life
as seen, experienced and felt by the men and women of the
past, or even by the elders or youth of the townships today,
with whom they have rarely laboured and whose mother
tongue they rarely understand.

(A) THE LABOURS OF MAN AND WIFE, AND THE REWARD

621 We have seen that until the nineteenth century the
632 township in the main was self-contained. Its people grew,
175 reared or caught their food, and also found the raw materials
[433] for their clothing; they built their own shelter, and cut
their own firing. As a result, both men and women had
174 each to develop "a wide range of simple skills", in the
175 apt phrase of a Lewisman, Mr. Donald MacLean, M.A.
Beyond the co-operative effort within a family, a farm
462 group, or a body of 'fellow-townsmen'—in which each
was competent to take a share according to sex and age—
aptitude and family tradition initiated some local division
[463] of labour. The resident smith and the 'caird' (usually
a wandering craftsman or tinker) appear in the oldest tales
and in the first rent-rolls. In addition there were honorary
[759] tasks. The smith might act as the village surgeon, ready

174 to bleed or to set bones, while some elderly woman would
175 serve as physician and midwife. Spiritual consolation
462 and renewal too could be found, even in the absence of
monk or nun, or of priest, minister or catechist. Enough
[463] here, that with agriculture and fishing, most crafts, except
[759] metal-work, were practised in every family. The 'range
of skills' was therefore wider and richer in latent art than
[793] might be supposed from those needed on a little croft today.
[593] Hence the importance of understanding the roles of husbandman and housewife, of "the man and the woman of
the house".

174 Their labours through the annual rhythm of the seasons
462 might be classed as efforts for the man and endurance for
the women (Fig. 9). Man's muscular strength and free-
221 dom of limb rouse him to efforts demanded by the thrust
[181] and lift of peat-cutting, digging in stony soil, or pushing
the foot-plough, step by step obliquely down a rocky slope. In the past an archer's chase of stag, wolf or boar demanded all a man's effort, and courage too, as fishing still does in the stormy north-western seas. With this facing of danger there came a gaiety that sparkled like the crest of a breaking wave. Women's work demanded by its unceasing activity a cheerful endurance, whether at labour on the croft, at corn-grinding, butter-making and peat-carrying, or carding, spinning and weaving; and with every task of day or season came the constant tending of cattle, of menfolk and children.

[538] This allotment of seasonal tasks and skills is neatly put in the proverb, "A man's cow won't yield milk, nor a woman's horse ploughing" (*Cha bhi bainn' aig bo fir, 's cha bhi treabhadh 'an each mnatha*). Yet women have always taken a share of work on the croft—too heavy a share when the men were much away—and the habit of

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462 221 175 462 127

encouraging them to rest when the men returned was fondly indulged. Much can be learned from the first (or 'old') "Statistical Accounts of the parishes of Scotland drawn up from the communications of the Ministers of the different parishes", *circa* 1790–96. Of the parish of Stornoway, where by 1790 many men had become crofter-fishers and others were at sea, the Minister wrote, "The women labour at least as hard as the men", even pulverising the ground with heavy hand-rakes (harrows being seldom used), and digging both with crooked and straight spades. That the men's debt was repaid in acts of manly service is true. A man would carry wife or sweetheart on his shoulders across a river in spate, whose rushing waters might have swept her away. But in her turn, a woman would wade into the cold sea, her coats high, bearing on her hips husband or son out to his open boat, so that he could start his night of exposure dry-shod and warm. This act of service was noted and illustrated by Burt at Inverness (about 1726), and it was common in the Lews before the building of stout piers, that is within living memory. Strong common sense, sheer necessity in fact, enforced such mutual service; but the sacrifice entailed was nerved by anxiety for those in danger, by personal pride and love. It was also true that it bore hardly on women, with their readiness for self-sacrifice and their ordeal of childbirth.

175 434 [127]

What return for their labours did the people get in the past, it will be asked, and what approach to sufficiency in a normal year? For the Island, the most thorough of the five Parish Accounts is that of Harris, with its fascinating retrospective notes (vol. x, p. 368). There the yield of a typical family share, a 'fourth' or 'farthing' land, was computed at "from four to five bolls" (which in Scotland

175 usually corresponded to six imperial bushels). The stock
434 was "four milch cows, three to perhaps four horses, and
as many sheep on the common as the tenant has luck to
rear". Although such estimates, especially of crop yields,
are apt to err on the favourable side, a comparison with
the same writer's statistics of stock (and rental) shows that
this estimate gives only a little over the modern average
per family in Harris, and allows an average sheep flock of
one score ewes.

175 The briefer Statistical Accounts of Lewis indicate the
434 average stock per family, suggesting comparisons both with
the present, and with an earlier time (Chapter II). In 1790
422 the cattle and horses, though small, were greater in number
per family than now. In Lewis there were eight head of
cattle per rural family, compared to 2·5 today; there were
one or two ponies per family (according to the topography
and ploughland of the parish) instead of an average of only
one horse to five or six families today; the small family
sheep-stock was similar; and there were also some goats,
175 say, one to every second family. In addition to these
226 resources, there was fishing; and the number of boats in
Stornoway parish, giving one boat to four families, is a
guide for the rest. Fishing, with net-making, was a predominant
occupation in all parishes by that time, and
boat-building was significant too.

175 As to changes, fishing had grown in importance since
433 about 1720, and kelp-making added an important new
resource. But one may doubt if the Island supported an
434 appreciably larger live-stock in 1790 than seventy years
before; one must rather assume smaller shares per family,
[182] for population had increased. A basis for agricultural
security was an adequate balance of sandy machar to
'black', peaty, clay land; and the area of machar, a limited

175 433 434 [182] [311] [232] [422] natural zone, could not be extended. In any case, the reclamation of clay land tended to slacken as efforts turned to fishing and kelp-making. The introduction or increased growing of potatoes added to the human, but hardly to the animal, food supply. Finally, while the beginnings of medical knowledge and vaccination had aided the growth of population after 1750, veterinary science had made no progress, nor did it advance in the Island for many years to come. We may conclude that an average stock per Island family about 1720 was rather more than that of 1790, and the acreage relatively larger, while both were greater than the average of today, particularly in the Lews.

175 262 244 What, then, could a family have to eat, from such crops and stock? While in winter even now there is almost no milk to be had on a croft, and there would be little then, there was salt meat, dried or salted cod (or herring) and fish oil; oat and barley meal and some rye meal; cabbages; and, increasingly in the eighteenth century, potatoes. Martin included potatoes among the crops grown even on far St. Kilda in 1697. A century later it was written that the people of Uig, for instance, had, though 'unwilling', been induced to grow and eat them 'forty years before'; and the years tend to be under-estimated where changes are slow and memories long! But it was written of Harris that by June the meal and potatoes had mostly been consumed, "and such as cannot afford to purchase imported meal subsist chiefly on the milk of their cows and sheep, with what fish they may chance to catch, till their wants are relieved by the first fruits of their potato crops early in Harvest".

175 511 162 171 We conclude that with even less money but a little more grain the population in the Island had fluctuated about a mean for some centuries before, as it had in so

175 much of Britain and Europe until about 1700. A modern
511 parallel may be found in Asiatic lands with the frequency
162 of famines alternating with periods of recovery or, in others,
the long-drawn misery of chronic under-nutrition and
171 endemic disease. In modern Europe, only international
[731] or civil war can now bring such extreme widespread misery.
And as peace brings partial healing, so in the Island past,
when good seasons returned after famines, the life of the
family renewed itself.[1]

175 The narrow margin of survival even in good seasons,
the risks of the bread-winner's death and of his family's
593 destitution, and the need of co-operation in so many tasks
made the family too small, weak and precarious a unit to
stand alone. Even with relatively little division (or
specialisation) of labour, and in spite of its apparent self-
sufficiency, the family had perforce to link itself with wider
circles of community life.

(B) JOINT LABOUR BY SMALL TEAMS: THE EVIDENCE OF TENURE IN 1715–26

175 Romance is hidden among the rent-rolls of the Seaforth
241 estates, all of which were forfeited when the Earl rose for
'King James VIII' in 1715. For of the rents withheld
427 from the government until 1720, on the mainland at least
[642] the loyal clansmen paid a considerable portion to their
[613] exiled chief, styled 'Marquis' by 'King James'. But the

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[1] The 'ups and downs' of a peasantry living on the margin of subsistence and subject to severe disease can be studied in India, 1871–1941, where the 'net' or mean change has to be correlated with the 'variability'.
[113] This wide problem was reviewed in a series of papers to 1948; "The Social and Psychological Significance of Variability in Regional Changes of Population", with examples taken from Indian villages. (A. Geddes, *Human Relations*, Vol. 1, 2, 1947–48; cf. *Geog. Rev.* 1942 and 1948; and *Geog. Journal*, 3, vol. 98, 1941).

175 rent-rolls record something of more vital and enduring
241 concern, the unit of community life in the Lews. This was
427 the 'conjoint' or 'group' farm of the labouring peasantry
—though it was overlaid in parts of the Island by the
[476] formation of tacks held by gentleman rent-farmers.

Both rolls are Judicial Rentals, that is to say, the
175 tenants, great and small, were convened by the Govern-
241 ment Commissioners and examined on oath as to the rents
427 they formerly paid; the accounts were then entered and
totalled. Because of the Jacobite resistance, the small
656 amounts of rent and the maladministration of the Forfeited Estates, doubt was cast upon the first rental, of 1718. A second rental was therefore compiled in 1726, upon a different system, which confirms the correctness of the first.[1] All were named, including those absent or 'valetudinary'.

175 Owing to the Island's comparatively smooth land sur-
361 face and access to the sea, the people could group themselves
as they chose. Whereas in the Highland mainland many
[182] a pocket of land is too small to keep more than two or three
[184] families alive and no fishing grounds are available, in Lewis
the people could join together in teams of four, five or six,
[433] to work a hamlet-farm or penny-land, definable as a
[476] joint-farm of unit size, and to man a boat with "four to row and one to steer".

175 The first point of interest is the equality of the shares,
241 each man paying exactly the same as his fellow-tenants for
his 'farthing',—a fourth, or other equal share of the farm.
427 An average share of rent was a little over 10 shillings sterling
[436] with additional payments in farm produce, though not (as

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[113] [1] A. Geddes, "Conjoint Tenants", etc., *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Second Series, vol. i, no. 1, 1948, pp. 54-60. This reconciles the evidence of 1718, reproduced in the Brand Report (1902), Appx. O, and that of 1726, edited by J. R. N. Macphail (1916).

175 might be thought) in cured fish. Here is a sample Deposi-
241 tion from Borve (W. Lewis), a township then composed of
427 five hamlet-farms, or 'pennylands', with their share of
436 outrun, peats and fishing grounds over the whole and
known as Five-Penny Borve.

> Donald McGillimichaell, William McHomas, Gillichallum McCoilog, and John McConnell in five penny land of Borrow and Parish of Cladach afor^{d} MAKE OATH severally that neither of them has any Tack of their possessions, But that each of them pay yearly to ye above Mr. Zachary McAuly for behoof of ye Countes (of Seaforth) for^{d} Nyne Pounds Scots (*i.e.* 15/- sterling), Two Bolls one Lipie meall, Fifteen pound weight of Butter, and three-fourths of a mutton. Depone they and each of them are someqt in arrear but know not the Particullars, and this is ye truth as they and each of them shall answer to God, and depone they can't write.
>
> (Signed) DAVID BETHUNE
> (Sheriff Substitute of Ross).

175 The only point on which these good fellows must have
241 had to face qualms in 'answering to God' was their lapse
427 of memory as to 'Particullars of arrears'! None of the
451 222 small tenants could remember this! Although the
[642] Chamberlain or Factor, Zachary MacAulay, denied it, he
[613] may have exhorted or compelled payment of rent in order
to forward it to the exiled 'Marquis'. Mainland rents were actually despatched to France from Leith in broad daylight under an armed guard of clansmen! At the same time, neither MacAulay nor the joint tenants were of Clan Kenneth, the MacKenzies. MacAulay himself was a man of high character—and a poet too—and not one to collect rents in order to embezzle them. His affirmation has the ring of truth, with little alloy. To the Government Commissioners he wrote that what made it impossible for Lewis peasant-fishers to have paid rent in full during civil war,

175 and still more to pay arrears, was "the rugged Hag,
241 Poverty, that would resist both King and Government".
427 We may guess that MacAulay passed a hint to the tenantry
451 that (in a good Gaelic idiom) they had better 'disremember'
details of arrears: and this they did.

175 Of the four names on the deposition quoted, one or
two may have been surnames, others the patronymics of
551 kinsmen. As is still the custom, clansmen knew one another
613 by names of many kinds. Stature or colour was used to
[178] distinguish a big John from a little one, a fair from a dark,
or a pale from a swarthy; occupations such as smith or
caird (artificer, not necessarily travelling tinker as now) were
[241] used, and also mere nicknames. Of the eighty-one crofters
or fisher-burghers in Stornoway, fourteen were Mac-
[226] Kenzies; and other mainland surnames, such as Fraser and
Gunn, Matheson and MacLennan, also showed their
descent from the immigrants brought in when MacKenzie
of Kintail founded the burgh to encourage fisheries after
1611. Each held a single holding, usually rented at two
shillings sterling.

175 To conclude, rentals about 1715 show (1) the character-
istic equalitarian grouping of small peasants as fellow-
241 workers in the hamlet-farms still held directly from the
427 superior, Seaforth; (2) the eighty-one small burghers of
631 Stornoway; and (3) tacksmen, responsible for the larger
part of the Island rent, but under whom we know that the
labouring peasantry, though without the local independence
of the others, also continued to dwell and to work together.
The tacksmen were to pass away, as many of them had
originally come, at the desire of a mainland lord, and the
lord, in his turn, was to leave; but the small peasantry of
immemorial stock still hold and work their land.

3: Geddes K-4, 5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

(c) FARM-TEAM AND BOAT'S CREW

175 241 427 476 423 The strictly equal division of rent on each joint farm shows the equality of sharing among its workers by 'run-rig'. By this system, periodic pooling and redivision kept the land in convenient blocks, a wet part here and a dry one there, all shared out to give each man an equal chance whatever the weather might bring. Such sharing was not mere static division of goods: it was the means for co-operative work, in ploughing and harvesting, or cutting peats, on land, and in manning a boat for the fishing.

175 241 476 For ploughing, two or three men were needed—one leading the horses (walking backward and singing his encouragement), a second to hold the plough and perhaps a third to turn the sods; but four ponies abreast were needed to haul the plough, and each tenant possessed only one or two. In addition, the plough might be preceded by an instrument to clear the ground, a 'reestle', requiring two horses and one man. A Gaelic proverb notes the selection needed in the horse team, and one disabled by age could be replaced as leader by another. Ploughing was necessarily co-operative.

175 241 [182] [134] [226] The rockiness and hilly ground of Uig and Lochs diminished the usefulness and, no doubt, the number of ploughs, but the importance of their fishing was some compensation for poor agriculture. In 1790 there were ninety ploughs in Barvas parish, where they were no doubt of ancient usage: a ratio of one plough to five families, or one per joint farm. To judge from the smoothness of Stornoway parish, ploughs were probably used there in a similar ratio.

175 476 While some jobs were done by no more than two people, —as when a ridge or 'lazy-bed' was put in order, the

175 couple advancing one on either side of it—many other
476 tasks were definitely team-work. Such was peat-cutting.
"When they are making peats, five people are employed.
175 One cuts the peat, another places it on the brink of the
476 ditch where it is dug; a third spreads it on the field, a
314 fourth pares and cleans the moss; and a fifth man is resting,
ready to relieve the man that cuts. The women are seldom
[462] at this work, but the men help one another alternately;
sometimes they must rest satisfied with fewer hands; but
the above is the full complement of men required to
[127] perform the work, according to their tastes." Buchanan's
description was written 160 years ago (1793); it remained
[178] true till recently and generally it is so still. There was thus
a normal team practice for work—even a man to rest was not
[538] forgotten! As the Gaelic proverb puts it: "They won't
make power (add strength) without a threesome and they'll
limp without a foursome!" (*Cha deanar treine gun triuir,*
[802] *'s bidh iad crubach gun cheathrar*). In Gaelic, as in Scots,
one speaks of a team according to its number, as "a pair,
a threesome, foursome" and so on, up to a tensome
(***deichnear***). In Lewis the farm-team was usually a foursome
or fivesome.

175 Only in exceptional cases was land worked and held
423 singly—as when a smith was kept busy at his anvil in
ploughing-time and harvest. Thus in 1715 one or two
241 rural smiths had single holdings of average value or more
[326] (£1), and one artificer or tin-smith (caird) a holding of
minimum value (5s.); and in the burgh all the small plots
[286] were held singly. As the women wove, at home mostly,
[462] no male rural weaver held a single plot; his weaving could
be done at slack times, so long as there was light; at busy
times he worked on the land with the rest of his team.

000 On the mainland, both Lowland and Highland, an

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593 On the mainland, both Lowland and Highland, an
outlying reclaimable patch of arable, lying near distant, little-
423 used pasture, frequently gave a single family the chance
[241] of a living. Such a site meant solitary toil for the man
and his family; but there might be advantages such as
[311] an occasional deer from the forest, or a post as hunting
[184] 'forester' such as was held by many a Gaelic hunter-
bard. In the Eastern Highlands such a high-lying croft was
[224] known as *Ruigh* (anglicised to Ry-). Traditions of poverty
[823] with individuality in isolation were handed down, for
example, from one of my forebears who held such a *ruigh*,
175 Rycorrach, one of several strung out along the 1250-feet
361 contour in a small, high valley off Strath Spey; the last
of them was abandoned only recently. Such a *ruigh* may
[511] have originally been a summer shieling, only occupied
when shortage of corn-land below, coupled with new
possibilities of a little profit from sheep-shearing, led to
settlement there.

At the fringe of the Island's deer 'forests' of North
178 Harris and Park, stalkers are still found in lonely lodges
361 and dwellings, individuals often of character and worth, as
224 they need to be; and a few isolated shepherds, such as
233 one finds on mainland sheep farms, dwell on small islets.
But in the Isles, isolated, high-lying spots for single crofts
361 are rare. And the clearest distinction must be drawn
between the true solitude of a single, isolated cottage or
621 croft and the sociability of a group of four or five, or even
184 two or three, crofts, such as those of lobster fishers; for
even a few families form the germ of a community, in work
and in leisure.

175 The potentialities of co-operative practice were over-
looked by agricultural reformers, excusably enough. For
178 when new methods were required, run-rig kept back the
654 pace to that of the slowest, virtually arresting reform. Soon

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175 after 1800, John Walker wrote that run-rig, " formerly very
178 general in Scotland, was abolished with improvements but
241 still subsists in many parts of the North. A number of
476 tenants of the same farm have a common pasture for their
cattle, and the arable is divided among them, by ridge
654 and ridge alternately, which each cultivates for his own
423 behoof. This gives them all a common interest in the
crop and, when there was no inclosure by dyke or hedge, might be of some advantage " in giving each person some protection " against the encroachments of his neighbour's cattle ". Speaking of joint possession this time, though without reference to survivals, Walker wrote that in the Lowlands " in old times a large farm might be occupied by a number of conjoint tenants who cultivated the farm in common and divided the produce. In this way the interest of each became the interest of the whole. They were ready, and were frequently called upon, to defend the common crop and cattle against depredations. There was then a necessity for such an allotment of land, especially in the Border country and in the Highlands." The team, in other words, was a unit of defence. But " nothing like improvement can be expected from farmers placed in this situation . . . [and] no community can ever equal the carefulness and industry of an individual in the management of his affairs ".[1]

[127] So far as it goes, such an analysis is incontrovertible;
for Walker was one of many contemporary observers
[181] who could contrast both the " improvement, industry and
carefulness " of the best individuals under a vigorous landlord, with the sluggishness of old-fashioned ways on backward estates. The fundamental reason for sluggishness was that

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[113] [1] John Walker, *Oeconomical History* [descriptive account] *of the Hebrides*, 1808.

175 the cultivable land and pasture having been shared out to
178 minimal fractions, they called for a minimum of labour by
241 the men—though housewives and mothers had always
plenty to do. The morrow's tryst for work might prove
476 a tryst with no work done. The men might foregather
654 on the moor to cut peats, for instance, but if one of their
423 number was late, become so absorbed by telling stories of
the Fenians that, ere work had begun, it was time to go
[181] home—resolved to meet for work some other day! As a
result, reformers advocated breaking-up the joint-holdings; and this was done in Lewis by 1830, as noted in the Brand Report. But mere division of the land did not increase its total amount.

175 Yet while noting the progress made by the liberation
178 of individual initiative, we can see the drawbacks of
individualism: the evictions made with no provision for
654 new homes, and later the monotony and the loneliness of
362 modern farm life, the mutual distrust of employer and
employee, and the general inability of farmers, as yet, to
423 co-operate. At the present, when planning, purchase and
476 sale are required on a large scale, particularly among small-holders, the interest of each is still "the interest of the
829 whole". The team-spirit must be recovered from the
work (not simply the play) of school onwards to further education and communal effort.

175 To sum up, every farm-hamlet was held jointly and on
241 equal terms, each joint holder being responsible for an
equal share of the rent, and the movable run-rig system
427 ensuring equal quality, as well as equal quantity, of land.
476 Common interest was assured, and there was mutual support in distress or sickness, as when one member, named in
423 a deposition of 1718, was 'valetudinary'. Lastly, work
was done in common not only when it led to efficiency

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241 through division of labour or united effort, but simply for
423 the sake of mutual stimulus and pleasure!

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476 (D) THE SHARING OF MACHAR, MOOR AND SEA

Embracing several joint-farms, each with its team or
175 crew, came the township. The township had not only its
632 common pasture, it had a special extensive system of
241 run-rig on sandy, coastal machars, as in parts of the Island
and in Uist—a system continued to this day.

423 On the machar of Barvas, cultivation strips are still
re-allotted periodically, as they were annually on all the
632 Island machars. The machars behind the 'storm-beach'
241 dunes of the Outer Hebrides closely resemble one another,
423 from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head. The immemorial
[178] system was noted by Walker and more fully by Carmichael,
who called it 'intermediate run-rig' to distinguish it from
[127] the run-rig of older joint farms on boulder clay, and it persists at the present day.[1] In North Uist the machar land is
laid off in large scatts or fields. Each scatt is divided into as
many rigs as there are crofts in the township. There may
be a dozen scatts in all, and usually half the number are
lying out in natural pasture, but they are put under crop
in rotation, so that each year one or two scatts will be
brought into cultivation, and the others left out after a
[625] course of cropping. When a scatt is to be brought into
cultivation the township 'constable' (who holds sway under
the district ground officer) appoints a day for allocating the
rigs.

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[113] [1] Walker (1808); Alexander Carmichael, appendix xlviii and xcix, pp. 213 ff. and 451 ff., Report of the Crofters' Commission, 1884. Socially these form the most significant evidence in this great Report. See also "Grazing and Agrestic Customs", *Celtic Review*, 1905. Cf. C. Macdonald, *Scot. J. Agric.*, 1919. See also his lively accounts of machar and pasture: *Highland Journey: Suil air ais*, 1943.

423 rigs. The rigs are numbered and then balloted for by a
632 double ballot. First the men approach the hat in any
241 order and pick out a number: this is to decide the order
in which they will approach the hat in the second draw. The second draw then decides the number of the rig. The crofter retains the rig while this particular scatt remains in cultivation, usually for a period of two or three years. The machar is shared by the whole township. The crops grown include a light type of oats, barley, a little rye, and potatoes; and clover may be cut.

423 In the division of the machar for potatoes at Barvas,
there are now no such hard-and-fast rules. The Common
244 Grazings Committee select a certain area for cultivation
[624] and each crofter is allowed to take as much land as he
requires within this area. This land is only cultivated for one year in six to ten years, and then reverts to grass. If cultivated for two or more years in succession there is a danger of the sand being blown away, and grass would be difficult to establish again. Potatoes are now the only crop
[134] grown on the Barvas machar.

Beyond the machar of the Isles lies the moor with its
175 fringe of reclaimed croft land. By Carmichael's day this
423 was held in individual portions, though, as he said, most
of it was once held in 'farms' in run-rig practised by small
241 units, not by the whole township. Why this difference
between the arable of the machar and of the moorland? Carmichael did not explain it.

134 Three explanatory points are, first, that the whole
241 cultivated land of the scatt or the machar is continuous,
whereas the moorland is hummocky and boggy by turns, and cultivation is therefore patchy; secondly, that, unlike the stony clays, the light shell sand is easily forked or ploughed and needs no 'team' to plough it; and thirdly,

134 241 that no initial reclamation had been needed on the scatt. In each year of cultivation, it is true, manures of a sort, principally seaweed and sooty sods from the roof, are applied; but they form a temporary improvement only for the crop to be taken, and do not constitute reclamation. After manuring, the grasses and clovers are simply turned over and the land, ' rested ' and manured by cattle, straightway gives its best crop.

175 311 It is otherwise with what is won from the moorland. As Dean Monro wrote of the reclaiming Lewisman in 1549: " In this country all is peat moss-land at the sea coast " (the long machars of the west of Uist give place to rocky coasts round much of Lewis), " and the place where he wins his peats this year, there he sows his corn the next year; after that he guids it weill with sea-ware ". Even where the slopes are fairly smooth, the peat land has not the uniformity of the machar and the continuity of its arable strips. In addition to sea-ware, sand may be brought by creel or by pony pannier to reclaim peat, forming a heavy burden. Moreover, the first crop is always a poor one, and may be almost lost. Although in his brief notes Monro used the singular ' he ', we know that the peat was usually cut co-operatively by teams. Hence most of the hard labour of reclamation may, indeed must, have been done co-operatively too, but by small teams, not by the members of a whole township together.

233 423 The sharing of common pastures is the last, but important, feature of land holding in common. The two kinds of pasture required were, firstly, those close at hand, animals being tethered or herded in the crop-growing season, and secondly, the more distant summer pastures. [632] The people of certain townships, which were without a large outrun close at hand, had to go some distance to

233 reach their shielings. From Point district (Eye Peninsula)
423 the cattle are still brought inland to the moors south-west
of Stornoway. And from Bernera on the west the cattle
[632] are swum to the hills of the main island, just as they once
were swum from Bute to the hill-pastures of Cowal in
Argyllshire across the Kyle at the ' Strait of the Swimming", Colintraive (Caol-an-t-snaimh). Nothing could be
more natural, indeed inevitable, than pasture in common
where large, open moors were to be found. The number
of animals allowed to each holding was duly apportioned
and then, as now, was known as the summing or ' souming ',
still checked at the annual gathering (*cosgoradh*).

423 Thus a cluster of conjoint farms shared " the grass on
621 the Ben and the tillage on the machar " (*Fiar air beinn agus
433 peighinn air machair*). Along the shore, sea-ware, driftwood and the like were allotted, too. And, as Carmichael
[175] put it, there was even " run-rig at sea ", for the fishing
banks were allotted among the available crews. Most of
[178] these rights are still shared by the members of a township.
But any crew can now fish freely where they choose, and
no township can legally keep away strange boats, nor even
steamers beyond the three-mile limit. This loss of communal rights stands in the way of remunerative fish-farming and its promise.

621 Profound social implications distinguished these three
423 concentric circles of community: the family; the farm-team
and boat's crew; and the larger, township group. These
[593] implications concerned labour, duty and right. The labour
[241] of reclamation gave a ' right ' to the land thus won from the
moor; and the duty of labour together, for fruits equally
[476] shared, gave the farm-team and fishing crew cohesion on
[632] land or sea—team and crew working for a common purpose.
On the other hand, as individual sharers in the common

621 pastures of machar and moor, each man had not so much
423 a 'common interest' or duty as, individually, a 'like
interest' or right. As now, each unit, whether team or
individual, would tend to desire a maximum stock for itself,
perhaps hoping it would have " the luck to rear " a little
more than its apportioned souming, at the risk of the
over-stocking which results in common loss. But though
need, greed or rivalry offered temptations, morality invited
careful sharing and was enforced by common interest.
423 The chief distinction between team and township was that
476 the tasks of the farm-team were constructive and, like that
of the boat's crew, active and co-operative. It is true that in
632 the township certain tasks were co-operative, such as the
wolf scaring of old times or the fox 'hunting' or shooting
on mainland moors today. The modern gathering of sheep
is also done together. But no constructive effort was
involved in the allotment of shares on the machar or of
stock on the moor, which were—and remain—matters
merely for communal control, not communal effort.

571 Now, the quality of a group alters with its quantity.
The intimate cohesion of a very small group of no more
than half a dozen members, diminishes with an increase in
number; but increase brings a compensating gain in
diversity. Ten or a dozen people tend to break up into
sub-groups, whether for small jobs or to enjoy conversation.
The smallness of a group limits the number of relationships;
an increase in number multiplies sub-groups, and
life is enriched. After living long with fewer than half a
dozen acquaintances, the same subjects keep cropping up
in talk, the same tales are re-told, too often, and people
cannot get away from one another's idiosyncrasies! A
very small addition turns the scale by renewing variety.
621 Here lay the social value of a township and neighbourhood,
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476 embracing several hamlets. Yet the strength of community
life sprang from co-operation in the farm-team and
632 in the boat's crew.

178 With the passing of the joint farm the greatest disciplinary
factor for work in common passed away from
461 agriculture. The fact that fishing still remained as a social
476 discipline, and actually developed in importance as the
farm-team declined and was abolished, was to prove all
the more significant to the vitality of social life until 1914
and even to the present.

(E) THE COMMUNITY ORGANISED: STEERSMAN AND CONSTABLE

621 As small groups of two to half a dozen men could manage
their agricultural affairs informally, by common consent,
no official was formally chosen to manage the affairs of the
622 fellow-workers on a farm. Where prompt decisions are
needed, however, even a small group should be led: a
boat's crew therefore choose their helmsman-skipper and
obey him at sea. And where several farm-groups made
up a township, more formal deliberations were required,
and to carry out their decisions they chose a responsible
man, the constable.

175 Of the crofters' manner of deciding communal affairs
621 in Uist, Carmichael wrote, in 1884, that these meetings
181 "were highly interesting, as showing the ability of the
people, their logical and legal acumen, their readiness of
resources and, I can happily add, their invariable courtesy
175 towards one another. There was one regular official known
622 as the constable on whom there lay the chief executive
responsibility. When a crofter is elected constable of his
[782] town-land, he takes off his shoes and stockings and, taking

175 his bonnet in his hand and bowing low and reverently, he
622 declares on honour in presence of earth and heaven, in
[782] presence of God and men—*Am fianuis uir agus adhair, am
fianuis Dia agus daoine—that he shall be faithful to his
[178] trust. This simple declaration of office is extremely impressive,
though now, alas, becoming obsolete from the
fears of the shallow thoughtless and the scoffs of the severely
[626] wise. The duties of the constables were to divide a new
peat-moss into banks for which lots are cast, to see that
every crofter does his share of free labour in road building
and repair, to engage herds and the like." (*Napier Crofters' Commission*, 1884.)

Naturally such duties called not only for tact, firmness
and authority, temporal and spiritual, on the part of the
constable, but for strong backing by the crofters, as a body,
175 of the man they had freely elected. But hence too, the
622 advantage to a covetous landlord of superseding free
557 election by appointing his own nominee. Martin found
that this had been done in St. Kilda shortly before his visit
427 (about 1695) and the people complained bitterly, as well
they might. We shall see that the same suppression of liberty was resented in Lewis less than a century ago. As a mere estate employee, moreover, the constable's position between the landlord's factor (or ground officer) and his fellow-crofters, was always difficult; and it might be cruelly hard, as when he was forced to help in destroying a neighbour's house at an eviction. Neighbourly union in a township was damaged by this duality of function, when he who should have been their own impartial executive was in the landlord's pay. When affairs got too bad in a Lewis township the people would appoint their own constable in addition to the landlord's; even so, rivalry and dual functions weakened the community. Such weakness

175 in communal organisation, historically brought about by
622 landlord or steward over a wide period, has commonly
557 been ascribed to some inherent feebleness in Gaelic
427 communal spirit. It is all the more vital to realise the
strength of community and its self-governance by neigh-
[623] bourly 'parliament' and chosen constable, by which the
people put their ideals into practice. These may be given
in the three traditional terms of fellowship, fairness and
freedom, summing up the Gaelic watchwords.[1] Unless the
struggle for freedom was too severe, fraternity, followed by
equality, came first.

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[538] [1] *Companas, caidreabh* or *cairdeas*; *ceartas, coir, cead cothrom,* or *co-roinn*; and *saorsa*.

CHAPTER VI

CLANSHIP: PEOPLE, CHIEF AND TACKSMEN

(A) COMMUNAL EQUALITY AND LORDLY PRIVILEGE

175 632 642 631 THE equalitarian customs of hamlet and township astonish many to whom the crofting villages are unknown and whose picture of the Gaelic past is derived from tales of the 'Forty-five. The widespread historic fact of lordship over a subject peasantry has obscured that of peasant-neighbourhood, more ancient, it would seem, and, in the Isles, still more enduring. The very existence of 'rural democracies' such as those just described has been doubted by certain scholars on the theoretic ground that they would be humanly unworkable! [614] Yet it is none the less true that the peasants as clansfolk gave loyalty to their chief. The fervent loyalty given to the exiled kinsmen-kings, the Stewarts, was a scarlet thread interwoven—or entangled—in the homespun [533] web of community, of clanship. Wherever the Gaelic is spoken, the Jacobite songs are sung with passion, and their echo has gone round the world.

[171] So in the life of the Gael, without doubt—and in varying degree throughout Britain and the rest of Europe—we have to envisage a composite, perhaps a contradictory, state of things, in which communal equality is overlaid by

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631 lordly rank: a working, equalitarian democracy dominated
by an aristocracy proudly refusing to work. The fascina-
632 tion of Gaelic community is, first, that its elements stand
642 out so clearly, and, secondly, that links were forged in
[171] clanship which made its living chain, though heavy, a
thing that shone with pride, and beauty too.
[621]

(B) CLANSHIP, COMMON DESCENT AND CLAN-HELP ('CUIDEACHY')

621 To what extent is it now possible to disentangle the two
contrasted elements of the lord or chief and the farm-teams
172 and townships? Prehistory is hard to unravel; but the
successive waves of conquest flung upon the Island shores
621 have left their jetsam, unmistakably. The circle of huts
177 found near a broch or commanding *dùn* recalls the tenants'
village grouped close to the castle of a chief, from early
history down to the 'Forty-five, and suggests a primitive
173 form of feudalism or of clanship. Traditions add their
621 part. In Uist one may still hear the ancient heroic lays
traditionally ascribed to Ossian, Oisean, son of Fionn or
631 Fingal—lays of which Macpherson's sonorous prose gave
free rendering. The Fingalian tales differ from the lays,
being frankly fantastic. Lewis had its own cycle of
Fingalian tales; examples are given by W. C. Mackenzie
(1919). Both lays and legends tell of an aristocracy or
warrior class, the Fenians, of their enjoyment of the chase,
and of their relative comfort, with wealth in gold and silver,
in banners and flowing mantles. The chase combined with
riches implies the existence of a community to feed
and clothe the huntsmen. The traditions of the Cuchu-
lainn cycle, with closer approximation to historical and
[177] archaeological truth, tell the same tale. Historically, in-

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177 coming Viking chiefs, who often intermarried with women
of the older aristocracy, seem to have retained some elements
621 of a pre-existing order, as did their successors, the
631 Scoto-Norman lords.

So, from history back to 'proto-history', there is
172 increasingly discerned the stages of superimposition, in
621 the Isles as elsewhere. In Central Europe archaeology has
recapitulated the stages by which peasant-villagers were
raided, then conquered by desperate herdsmen, on horseback
or bearing better arms, who had ridden in from the
drying grasslands further east. In the Isles the later conquerors
were the fierce raiders from the sea, sailing in from
173 the fjords of the North. An unbroken chain of tradition
621 from Viking to Gael is vividly conveyed in the stirring
saga of the Galley or Birlinn of Clanranald, composed
177 only a year or two before the 'Forty-five (epitomised,
Chapter VI (E)).

173 When the conqueror had won the submission of the
conquered and secured his livelihood, comfort and leisure
622 by their work, he came in time to bring their interests
631 nearer to his own. Yet whenever the ambitions of two
rival chiefs conflicted, the essential predatory attitude
remained and either might bring fire and sword against
the other's harmless people. Through time, the successive
tides of emigration and storms of conquest bridged
the contrast of extremes. Not two orders of chiefs and
people, but successive strata, with intermixture of blood
and of tradition, must be sought in the Isles as elsewhere.
Traditional life in so difficult an environment
tended to be diversified and to encourage all-round aptitudes
in people and chief, their characters having much in
[177] common. As to blood, the history of Island Norsemen
records the marriage of the new-coming chiefs with heiresses

173 from the old chiefs' families, as in the genealogies of
622 MacDonald of the Isles and the MacLeods. A special
631 feature contrasting with English history is that claims to
[177] differences of descent, instead of being maintained—as
between the Saxon and the conqueror of Norman blood—
[171] were fused. Even when the ancestor of the chief was alien
to the locality, the people and the chiefs ultimately claimed
173 to be of one and the same descent. Neighbourhood
621 softened the impositions of the hunting herdsman upon
his human herd, and the feeling of kinship brought
reconciliation.

173 How far, then, can the family name, which proclaims
621 every 'son' and 'daughter' of Leod to be of the *clann*,
the 'children'[1] of the first Leod, really betoken a blood
614 tie? Both the differences of race to be found in clanship
829 and the ties it formed are well brought out in a tale of
Highland pride, still told with Highland laughter across
539 the Minch in Kintail. A French skipper (an importer of
claret) touching at Kintail three hundred years ago, met a
short, dark man and asked him of whose clan he was.
"The Clan Rae," was the reply, "but we are of two kinds,
the tall, fair MacRaes and" (a little pityingly) "the short,
dark MacRaes." "And which are you?" "I," said the
wee, black fellow, drawing himself up, "am one of the
tall, fair MacRaes!" "Then God help the short, dark
173 MacRaes!" said the skipper. Even one link with the
621 blood of the chief—and that not necessarily legitimate—
614 was enough for a man to found a claim to kinship, not
829 merely as a MacRae, but with the tall, fair chief through

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[551] [1] In Gaelic, as a man is called MacLeoid (son of Leod), so a woman is NicLeoid (daughter), and the clan, *Clann Leoid*. The absurd addition of 'son' to a woman's name (as in English surnames such as 'Johnson') is unthinkable in Gaelic, in which a woman would be named 'John's daughter', *NicIain*.

173 his near kin. Again, much as in the medieval *gestes* of
621 France, fosterage of an heir by a clanswoman formed the
614 closest possible tie to at least one family of the people
829 from ancient to recent times. For it linked the heir by
[171] sympathy—though not by equal obligation—to elders
and playmates in childhood and his contemporaries in later
life.

565 To re-state this ' contradiction ' of equality and privi-
lege, we have thus a hierarchy of ' class ' imposed upon
a ' classless ' society. For the joint farms and the township
were essentially classless. The two classes, the lord and
the people, were primarily opposed, war having placed the
conqueror above those who fed him. This state of things
was not active ' class-war ', for the armistice could endure
indefinitely by means of the bargain made between the
classes for some exchange of services; none the less, it
was built upon class conquest.

175 That all should ultimately claim the lineage of their
565 chief was a remarkable solution to the hereditary opposition
614 of class. A man who knew the Islanders well, John Lane
Buchanan (1793), noted how in conditions of the utmost
622 poverty the poorest addressed each other as ' lady and
[576] gentleman ', *bean-uasal* and *duine-uasal*, a courtesy not lost
today. And every clansman had a right to shake the hand
of his chief, as Edmund Burt observed in his vivid *Letters*
[577] *from the North* (written after 1721). Indeed the sense
of mutual obligation implicit in Gaelic society is well
illustrated by the homely word *coir*, usually translated
' right '; it is equally used for right's correlative, duty—as
when a Scots or Irish crofter may say " You've a right (a
duty) to help your mother "—and for a ' right ' (privilege)
to shake the chief's hand. An English equivalent would
be duty-privilege, or duty-right. Similarly, the same

175 565 614 words are used for neighbourly help among crofters and for services to the chief.[1]

622 175 582 Full freedom of choice in marriage prevailed among the people, who honoured marriage and enjoined continence; but the position of the chief placed him apart from the rest of the community. Now, the more equalitarian the community, the more free are a couple to choose one another on grounds of mutual affection, passion and respect; the parents, too, are more likely to encourage or support a suitor for their child because of character and virility, rather than means.

175 565 582 The lads of the clan, chief and people, grew up together in an isle or glen. But in manhood, while a labouring lad sought a wife from the girl playmates of his childhood and his fellow-workers at the peats, at the harvest, or in the shielings, a chief's choice was confined to his own class. In pre-feudal clanship, tanistry, *i.e.* the choice of a chief among the higher kin, gave a wider choice for marriage near home than feudal primogeniture, irrespective of the wishes of the chief's kin except in extreme cases of unfitness. In Scotland, tanistry prevailed even in the royal line until the eleventh century. But with the dominance of primogeniture, the young chief chose a bride outside his own community for reasons other than those of human feeling, honoured by Gaelic lyrical and religious tradition and even by the Church.

As a result, the chieftain's son was granted a licence forbidden to the rest, a temptation to maidens and a bad

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[192] [476] [1] *Cuid* (cognate with *quota*) means a portion, lot or share, or what is one's own (*n.f., gen. codach*); and the associated verb (*cuidich*) means not simply to share but actively to help. The apportioned lodging given to the chief and his 'tail' of 'lads' was the 'cuideachy'—*cuid-oidhche*; while the famous motto of the Seaforth Highlanders is Help the King!—*Cuidich an Righ!*

175 example to lads! Often of tall, fair stock, physically
565 superior from better feeding, accustomed to have his own
way, better taught, finely dressed, free and welcomed
582 wherever he went in the glen that fed and fostered him,
the young chief had favour on his side; moreover he was
protected from the vengeance of jealousy. A song in
praise of a young chief of Clan Leod boasts that "the girls
[836] would give their snoods for Rory"! When she lost her
maiden snood to him, a girl would be excused, and her
'natural' child not dishonoured, but granted a share of
paternal affection and inheritance. After marriage, a chief's
175 lady made allowances for his past. But licence, once a
habit, is hard to check, and the Gael tell bitter tales of
837 jealous wives, married for policy, and their revenge upon
a rival. One gathers that where there were enough gentry
to meet, choose and inter-marry freely, as among the Island
tacksmen, decency was better observed; but among landlords in the Highlands, as in other lands, local licence
was common down to the last century. Then, whereas a
Minister of the Established Church could hardly blame
his own Patron (or his son), a Free Church Minister could
speak out from the pulpit!

175 Of the legendary *jus primae noctis*, the 'law of the first
585 night' of Boece and other old historians by which a lord
had at one time the 'right' to rape the bride of any of his
serfs or tenants, there is no authentic record. Yet from
the primal right or wrong of conquest, some such 'law'
was forced upon the Gael, as upon other peoples. Boswell
records MacQuarrie of Ulva's belief that the custom of
paying him a sheep when a tenant married was followed in
lieu of such a right! Obligatory hospitality also lent itself
to abuse. In all relations of chief to people, there were
adjustments. In more complex society, poverty makes

175 585 womanhood a prey to prostitution. The licence of a chief among young women was preferable to this; but evils were inherent in the fact of lordship.

(c) TWO ISLAND BARDS: MARY MACLEOD AND THE BLIND HARPER

175 613 621 While in Lewis the continuity of clanship was sorely shaken by the fall of the chiefs, the Torquil-MacLeods, in Harris it was maintained in the family of the Norman-MacLeods of Dunvegan in Skye. The family of Dunvegan is famed for chivalry and gentleness, not only in the songs of the past but in the speech of Skyemen to the present day. Harris did not suffer the bloodshed endured in Lewis from the death of Torquil until after the accession of MacKenzie in 1611; and Harris was not involved, like Lewis, in the troubles of 1715. MacLeod of Dunvegan retained Harris until the end of the eighteenth century, when it was purchased by a cadet of the family who had made his fortune in the East; and it only passed out of MacLeod hands half a century later. Hence it is that while in Lewis there is still talk of the 'give and take' between later laird and people, [533] in Harris there is more. In "the hereditary Hall of MacLeod" of Dunvegan, two Island bards gave birth to immortal song. Together, the tales of Lewis and the songs of Harris and Skye give us an authentic record of clanship in fact and feeling, linked with community today.

[628] In spite of the break in continuity, ease and warmth of feeling could spring up between a MacKenzie of Seaforth and the Lewismen, though Seaforth was a peer of the realm, and of a mainland name, not a MacLeod by direct descent. Playful rhyming, chaffing contests between titled laird and small tenant, are recorded by A. Carmichael and W. C.

175 Mackenzie. For all that, in 1900 a crofter said: "We called
613 the old proprietor Seaforth, but I believe his right name
621 was the Prince of Welsh". To him the Earls were royal!

[829] Freedom of intercourse is embodied in the language
to this day. With 'a stranger', a little spoken Gaelic
197 lessens 'strangeness' and quickens intimacy, because
Gaelic conveys essential human relationships as English
565 rarely can—even the English of the 'democratic' Low-
576 lands. For instance, a well-dressed stranger, though
young, is usually addressed in English as 'sir' by a senior
crofter, and, just as in the South, without the expectation
of 'sir' or 'ma'am' in return. In English, that is, respect
is given to class. In Gaelic, age receives respect: it is the
stranger, if the younger, who adopts the respectful 'you'
(the second person plural, *sibh*), while the crofter, if the
older, uses the friendly singular, 'thou' (*thu*). If they
are of equal age, and neither is elderly, 'thou' would be
[562] used by both. Similarly, respect is given to womanhood;
and an older woman who would say 'Sir' in English will
say 'My dear' in Gaelic.[1]

614 It is not only by daily contacts that we may understand
the relationship of people to chief, but by the height of
feeling it may attain, and by the beauty of its expression.
[175] Among the finest of the later songs of praise to Gaelic
clanship and its chiefs are those composed by two Island
[533] bards, a woman of Harris and a man of the Lews. Mary
MacLeod, *Mairi Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*, was a kinswoman
of the MacLeods of Dunvegan and Harris, and a beloved

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[123] [1] Calling on the sub-postmistress in a Highland place where I was
known to be a friend of the laird, I was addressed as "Sir". But hardly
had we passed to Gaelic when this woman, my elder and a person of culture,
laughingly used an expression then strange to me. Halted, and suddenly
shy at being forced to translate, she said at last, "When thou wast *a lump*
[just a boy!] '*nuair bha thu cnap*!" But rightly, she would have been
slightly shocked had I said 'thou' to her.

175 nurse in the family. Born about 1615 in Rodel (south-east
533 Harris), she composed her last elegy (to Sir Norman
[614] MacLeod of Island Berneray, Harris) in 1705; she may even have composed her last great song (on the birth of the nineteenth chief) a year later.[1] Towards the end of the century (between 1664 and 1693), Mary's younger contemporary, Rory Morison was bard at Dunvegan, being known as the Blind Harper, *An Clarsair Dall.* A Lewisman, Rory could not have found adequate patronage as a bard in that Island, the chiefs of Lewis having passed away. Morison is stated to have been a descendant of the Gaelic judges or *brieves* of Ness and the son of a minister, and he was to have entered the Church along with two brothers, later ministers. But smallpox blinded him, and he turned to oral, not to written 'literature', perhaps to our ultimate gain.[2]

Here then were two bards, man and woman, whose fame is growing, rather than waning, in our own day. While Mary was illiterate, however rich in lore, Rory, with his clerical home and family tradition of Gaelic jurisprudence, must have begun to read Latin and English, perhaps Greek, and also Gaelic, though not reaching Hebrew (as his brothers would) before he was struck blind. Mary, so far as is known, was the first to compose what may be called 'court' song in simple words and in the 'strophic' verse-form of rhythm and assonance enjoyed by all Gaels, Scots and Irish, since her time. Lacking the learning of the dying school of classical bards, Mary is more personal than they, " a lyrist not less than panegyrist "; and she is
[614] more spontaneous. The same seems true of Rory. Yet
[622] the themes of the classical bards were renewed by these

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[1] James Carmichael Watson, *Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod,* 1934.
[2] John Mackenzie, *Sar Obair: Beauties of Gaelic Poetry,* 1877.

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two singers, as in the portrayal of a chief, " blue-eyed and with clustering, golden locks . . . and brown, ruddy cheeked "; in descriptions of " his wisdom, prowess and justice " or of his traits—his " joyous, fresh, and shamefast cheek ", and as a friend to the poor seeking justice, and to men of learning, musicians and bards. In the halls of chiefs where ancient joys and traditions were maintained, the ideal of chiefship was essentially that of manhood. Nor is the chief's lady forgotten either by Mary or by older bards, though womanhood is a theme rather for lyrics and for sacred song.

Even at Dunvegan the stream of clan life was once interrupted in the lifetime of these two bards, as the *Clarsair* told in his satire on the anglicised seventeenth chief (1693–99), and as Mary hinted in her haunting ' Croon ' or *Cronan*. Happily, the stream was renewed [173] by this chief's successor. Tradition and song show that such renewal was primarily due to the strength of communal life among the ' people ' which called out leadership from the chiefs, in justice, in war, and in the encouragement of the oral arts. High conduct from the chiefs was invoked [577] by the expectations of their people. More important still, it was the warmth of feeling among the people as a group, and their ties to one another, which lit their personal loyalty to a chief and called forth his loyal leadership in return.[1]

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[1] Gaelic loyalty was burned away in the Jacobite Risings, but as the last Rising left the Island relatively unscathed, one may simply refer to two works: Audrey Cunningham's *The Loyal Clans*, 1932; and J. L. Campbell's *Highland Songs of the 'Forty-five*, 1933 (Gaelic and translation). The first work analyses the need for a personal relationship to Scottish kingship, felt so keenly by the clansmen. The second gives authentic evidence of the spirit of loyalty. (Both the sense and a hint of the rhythm, with several of the airs, are available for the English reader.)

I know of no explicit statement of the conclusion given above; for lack of the sociological approach attempted here; but it is surely implicit in the thought of many a Gael.

(D) TACKSMEN AND SUBTENANTRY, FACTOR AND LORD: 1611–1800

175 427 614 621 We saw that in the Rent-roll of Lewis in 1718 the first sixty-four entries, signed personally, recorded comparatively large holdings (tacks), the annual rentals of which were from £3 : 6 : 8 to over £10, the occupant of one (or more) of which would be styled Tacksman or 'Man of the Farm-town' (*Fear Baile*). While one or two tacks were shared, a few tacksmen may have held more than one tack—though one cannot be sure, owing to the recurrence of the same [551] Christian names in each clan. It is striking that half the tacks—though mostly small ones—were held by men of undoubted mainland names, of which there were twenty-two MacKenzies, four MacLennans and three Mathesons. [166] These were doubtless the descendants of gentlemen from the mainland who in 1611 had helped to win and hold the [551] Island for MacKenzie of Kintail, later Lord Seaforth. Of native Lewis names the principal are MacAulay, Morison and perhaps MacIver.[1] Only three small tacks were held by MacLeods, who may have been of Island stock. Lochs and Eye on the east coast had largely been granted in tack to the new-comers; on the south-west and west coast MacAulays and MacIvers held much of Uig and a few farms in Cladach; but more of Cladach and most of Ness (in the north) were still held by joint tenants. Stornoway was held by burghers, of whom perhaps two-thirds bore mainland names. The peasantry remained as unnamed subtenants on these holdings, of which the total rents show

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[114] [1] The writers of the Brand Report (1902) assumed that MacIver is a native name. This would seem to be borne out by its frequency as a surname today, in contrast to MacKenzie, Matheson or MacLennan, though W. C. Mackenzie (1919, p. 92) thought the MacIver tacksmen arrived with Seaforth.

175 they were composed of at least one to four or five hamlet-farms.
427 The tacksmen also had cottars for service.

614 Thus in Lewis a special reason, the accession of Seaforth,
621 had led to the granting of many tacks to his own
clansmen and to natives. Elsewhere in the Highlands the
175 procedure is noteworthy during the sixteenth, seventeenth
427 and eighteenth centuries, for the collection of rents from
614 the peasantry by means of large tenants had financial
advantages for the greater landlords (I. F. Grant, 1930).
184 The tacksman's continuation as tenant depended on his
[661] paying regularly, for the lease was not a hereditary grant.
A tack could also provide for a lord's younger sons or
[565] immediate relations, such as formed the gentry of the clan.
Along with smaller lairds, these furnished the cadres of
officers who led the clan regiments down to the 'Forty-five,
and later the Highland Regiments of the line and
the Fencibles down to Waterloo. Like MacKenzie, other
great chiefs such as Argyle or Breadalbane leased tacks
when they acquired the status of peers and took possession of
fresh lands with Royal support, after vain resistance from
native chiefs and their followers. In Lewis, the fiscal
status of tacksmen was applied both to MacKenzie's supporters
from the mainland and to those with ancient roots
in the west of the Island. The latter may have thought a
mere lease a poor substitute for hereditary tenure, though
a legal compromise necessary if their possession was to be
[666] continued. The lack of permanent tenure ultimately led
to the departure of their descendants.

175 From the families of these tacksmen have sprung most
621 of those of Lewis birth or descent who achieved fame
before the twentieth century. Of the MacAulays, we saw
614 Zacharias was Chamberlain during and after the 'Fifteen.
554 Thomas Babington Macaulay came of the same line, as

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175 did another Zacharias, closer than Thomas to the Lewis
554 tree, who worked nobly with Wilberforce for the emancipation
614 of the slaves.[1] Still another connection was a
621 Canadian emigrant, grandfather of the late T. B. Macaulay,
[668] LL.D. Alexander Mackenzie, the explorer of the Mackenzie
River, was a descendant of Lewis tacksmen.
MacIvers and Morisons also distinguished themselves.
[178] But the sons and daughters of crofters had to await the
[871] provision of education in English before they could rise
in trade, learning or war; hence few Lewismen of the
greatest Lewis name, MacLeod, achieved eminence until
the twentieth century.

175 As for the peasantry, the interposition of a new or
554 enlarged class of tenantry between themselves and the
superior must have meant that they had to labour on the
565 tacksman's home farm, and no doubt pay more in produce
427 or cash. Hence the Gaelic saying that if the position of
the small (joint) tenants was bad, that of the subtenants
was worse, "the Evil One itself". Following the long
fight with the Fife Adventurers, hardship may have been
greatest where mainland tacksmen were placed above the
joint tenants; but even under MacAulays and MacIvers
rents may have been raised and some of the joint freedom
lost which was still enjoyed in Ness. Whatever adjustments
had been made in an earlier period had to be re-made
with the beginning of Seaforth's new order.

In the following generations, contradictory accounts of lairds, factors and tacksmen are given by contemporary observers. Certain of these insisted that, given the poverty of the lands as a whole, the chiefs and landlords, factors and tacksmen, were the saviours of their people. Yet even among those who supported authority in general, there was

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[113] [1] Charles Booth, *Zachary Macaulay*, 1934.

175 seldom agreement as to which of these three types brought
554 the greater good or wrought the lesser evil. As elsewhere,
565 tacksmen declined by the end of the eighteenth century.
427 Buchanan wrote in 1793, " The greatest tacksman in Lewis
is the Laird's ground officer " ; but he added that the
Island was for the most part inhabited by tenants holding
directly from Seaforth, who " easily perceived the folly,
as well as the inhumanity, of lending out the people on his
island to imperious tacksmen, for the purpose of raising
fortune to themselves on the ruins of the unfortunate
subtenants ". At a later date a former Chamberlain of
the Lewis estate, John Munro Mackenzie of Calgarry, held
otherwise. To the Napier Crofters' Commission in 1883,
he said: " Till the beginning of this century the greater
part of the Lewis was in the hands of tacksmen, or middlemen,
who got in some cases from their subtenants in money,
produce, and labour, what nearly paid their rents ". Their
names were those of the seventeenth century. Early in
the century, " when Mr. Stewart-Mackenzie married the
Hon. Lady Hood, daughter of Lord Seaforth, and took the
management of the estate into his own hands, he did away
with the middlemen, and let the land direct to the crofters.
[232] This, no doubt, was a step in the right direction, but it
had its disadvantages, as the example of a good middleman,
who looked after his people, and who was industrious in
farming . . . and stock-breeding, was beneficial to the
people, though in some cases they may have been petty
tyrants." He might no doubt have added that they could,
if need be, stand between a bad factor and the crofters.

[228] When they lost their tacks, some of these ' middlemen ' turned to the growing fishing industry and helped to supply capital and enterprise as curers; their successors were active through the nineteenth century and I spoke with

175 the last of these in outlying villages after 1918. When
554 Matheson purchased the Island in 1844 he left the fishing
565 industry to the curers, great and small. Particularly before
427 most fishermen could speak and write English, the local
curers were best fitted to take action not only in marketing
228 but in approaching the Government to aid the construction of piers and harbours. On the whole, their long ties with place and people, coupled with education, made them useful leaders of a community in which leaders were needed to adapt life to a changing economy. Here and there one or two small farmers survive, a little apart from the main townships. Aided by a long cultural tradition, they meet changing times by combining with their inheritance a sane selection of new elements.

175 Looking beyond the Island to the mainland, the time is
621 approaching for a fair assessment to be made of the historic
622 parts of chief and landlord, factor and tacksman. Not only
is there an enlarging body of documentation, but a growing
427 understanding of communal strands in tradition and of
184 changing social economy seen in relation to geographic
factors of place and region. And in the Gaeldom, condi-
[178] tions varied greatly between bordering areas from Mar to
[182] Kintyre,[1] and the heartland of tradition in the Hebrides.
In the Island, one must remember the fundamental opposition, yet the recurrent readjustments of chiefs and people. These, and not only individual differences in character and conduct, explain the differences of experience and opinion
[829] quoted above. The people's belief, so frequently given
to me thirty years ago, that it was bad factors, not the landlord, who taxed and harried them unjustly, expressed an idealistic faith in a chief, rather than the facts of economy
[565] and history. For lordship begins with the imposition of

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[113] [1] A. McKerral, *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, 1947.

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rents, and its end is in sight when these cease to provide for the lord's desires.

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(E) STORM AND GALLEY; BATTLEFIELD AND REGIMENT

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The peaceful round of daily life formed the most enduring test of the mutual loyalty uniting the commoners of the clan, and linking chief to people. Yet the tensest ordeals came in hours of danger faced together, whether at sea in a small fishing boat or a many-oared galley, or in war in a clan company. The Gaels' own records must speak for them. Many a song of the Isles conveys the team-spirit of the crew though without describing its men.

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And although Mary MacLeod's song of MacLeod's Galley be irretrievably lost, there survives one epic poem portraying the ship, the storm and, man by man, the crew who warred against the waves and won. Alexander Macdonald's *Birlinn of Clanranald* is unmatched in Gaelic, and probably in English, verse for its portraits of the crew in action, from steersman to 'look-out'. The flowing metrical translation by Pattison with Hugh MacDiarmid's vivid prose helps to give the English reader some vision of a crew of Gaelic freemen at their best.[1]

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The poem opens in slow traditional rhythm with "the Blessing of the Ship", the arms and the crew. Then the bard, speaking for the stately skipper, "incites the sixteen oarsmen to row" out of the bay, and they row to a rousing shanty, a *Iorram*. Next, in readiness for the voyage and

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[1] Thomas Pattison, *The Gaelic Bards* (2nd ed.), 1890 (pp. 1-28); and Hugh MacDiarmid (Ed.), *The Golden Treasury of Scottish Poetry* (pp. 65-85), 1940. Cf. A. Macleod (Ed.), *Sar Orain: Three Gaelic Poems*, Glasgow, 1933. The different themes of its sections, each in its own metre, have been published separately, in *The Songs of the Hebrides*, and elsewhere.

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with words of heartening but well-weighed praise, each post with its duties is apportioned to the man best fitted for it by his temper, strength and skill—or even by some special weakness! First the steersman:

> " Let this broad heavy hero sit at the helm, powerful and limber . . .
> Light handed on a helm, watchful and wary, cautious yet quick . . ."

Then others " Put this great-fisted and shrewd man to grapple with the rigging. . . . Windwise, he'll work with him that holds the shrouds . . . a thick-set, broad and craggy champion . . . and with him that grips the sheet, a neat and handy fellow. Set at the prow our pilot, keen-eyed for the airts, and with a sure sight for each landmark like a guiding star. And set at the halyard this self-reliant seaman, tried and clear-headed, grimly alert. . . ." They put to sea, and as the sea roughens, the steersman cries, " Quick at my ear a man to watch for the rain-squalls! Choose me a fellow who's half-fearful, yet not a real coward . . . for he must be quick to shout when he sights a big sea bearing down on us. But let no other but himself be by me, lest there be babble and hubbub to bewilder us." Then, as the seas break over the open vessel:

> " To bale her let this strong man rise, active and brave,
> Who will not blanch or yield or tremble for the shouting wave. . . ."

Next, " Let two stout fellows, these thick-boned, rough and hairy chaps, haul on the ropes behind the sails, to raise or lower them as we're lowered or uplifted by the surging seas. . . ." And last, for fear one fail or be dashed overboard by a wave, six nimble men are picked to stand by,

174 ready to leap fore or aft: " Quick to move as the mountain
614 hare . . . or the hounds after him; quick to climb as a
501 squirrel in the spring-time". Then comes the stirring
539 evocation of the storm, testing each man's mettle and the
577 discipline of all, until at last, their ship battered and themselves bruised and weary but undaunted, the crew reach Islay and round the sheltering point of Carrickfergus. There, with thanks to the High King, they drop anchor, the *birlinn* rides in peace, and all find meat and drink and rest.

175 As at sea, so in war, loyalty could rise to heroism in
614 individuals and corps. Young men were attached to their
721 chiefs by chivalrous leadership in warfare, both before
703 1745 and later. The Highlanders' high character contrasted with that of most Regiments of the Line, too often disciplined with the lash while demoralised by debauchery. From Lewis the Islesmen went out to the Seaforth or the Ross-shire Highlanders. General David Stewart of Garth, historian of the Highland regiments and people, wrote of these two regiments that again and again their courage and coolness in battle were proved.[1]

175 Not less striking was the record of Gaels among civil
648 populations, whether in Britain, as in the 'Forty-five, or abroad. In Germany in 1761 and 1762 much was said of the Highlanders' kindness, " for the boors were much better treated by those savages than by the polished English and French". Similarly in the Low Countries in 1814 and 1815, they were *enfants de la famille* and " kind as well as brave". The mayor of Brussels declared that they " called forth the attachment and esteem of all", and the inhabitants requested him " to endeavour to detain the 78th (2nd battalion Ross-shire) regiment of Scotchmen in the town, and to prevent their being replaced by other troops".

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[1] *Sketches of the Highlanders*, 2 vols., 1821-2

000 and to prevent their being replaced by other troops ".

175 Such discipline was only possible when their officers trusted to feelings and character. The officers were usually
703 Highlanders, though some notable Lowlanders led Highland corps, and a Welshman commanded the Ross-shire Highlanders with success. Stewart, who had served with the regiment, after recounting their disciplined courage in battle in India, wrote: " The notice of all India was attracted by the temperate habits of the soldiers and Colonel Mackenzie's mode of punishment, by a threat to inform his parents of the misconduct of a delinquent, or to send a bad character of him to his native country ". In the twenty-five years of peace and war during which the first battalion had been established, there had not been desertion among the men enlisted in the Highlands. " There were in this battalion nearly 300 men from Lord Seaforth's estate in the Lewis. Several years elapsed before any of these men were charged with a crime deserving severe punishment. In 1799 a man was tried and punished. This so shocked his comrades that he was put out of their society as a degraded man who brought shame to his kindred. The unfortunate outcast became unhappy and desperate, and Colonel Mackenzie, to save him from destruction, applied and got him sent to England, where his disgrace would be unknown and unnoticed . . . [and] he quite recovered his character."

If the officers' regard for their men led to true discipline, the men's expectations of high conduct from their officers brought forth leadership in the field. Mutual regard began in peace. When Stewart of Garth first joined his regiment as a young ensign, his colonel assigned to him an elderly private to act not only as servant, according to regulations,
[551] but also as intimate counsellor. Stewart tells how this

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private naturally addressed him in Gaelic by his Christian name, and writes of him with the warmth and respect due to an elderly relation. Something of this mutual regard remains; and young Englishmen of education have told me of their surprised admiration for the character of the best traditional type of 'Regular' Scottish, and particularly Highland, non-commissioned officer, before and during the two world wars.

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Such bravery and character abroad led Stewart to the conviction that their foundation must be the character of the peasantry at home. He held that the Highlanders' home life demanded support, and having served with the Sutherland Highlanders, he felt the deepest grief and anger at the clearances of the Sutherland estates by an English proprietor. When Stewart remarked that a few deaths mattered little when compared to the nation's renown, for this 'endures for ever', he referred to deaths in battle, which he analysed as typically of 1 to 2 per cent of the men. Whereas upon long voyages or in unhealthy stations, 25 per cent of soldiers or civilians might die of disease.

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Yet, to the Gael, discipline did not mean blind submission to injustice. "Accustomed to obey their immediate chiefs, who durst not break a compact with them, and to have promises punctually fulfilled, implicit submission was not yielded when they had rights to preserve." For the bond by which, of old, the Highlanders "were held to their superiors and one another" was "the bond of fidelity and affection. . . . In later times, when they entered the King's service, they considered themselves as contracting parties", and resented breaches of faith. Of eight mutinies in as many regiments, that of the Seaforth in 1778 should be instanced here. The regiment included many Lewismen, with Mackenzies and Macraes, and also

175 some 200 men enlisted at Perth. When, shortly after they
703 had been embodied, the men were quartered in Leith prior
614 to embarkation, complaints arose about infringement of
648 engagements. "The regiment refused to embark, and
marching out of Leith, with pipes playing and two plaids
fixed on poles instead of colours, took a position on Arthur's
Seat at Dunsappie, of which they kept possession for
several days." The inhabitants of Edinburgh, who had
encouraged them, supplied them with provisions and ammunition.
"After much negotiation, a proper understanding
was brought about . . . and they marched down
the hill . . . with pipes playing and with the Earls of
Seaforth and Dunmore, and General Skene, at their head.
They entered Leith, and went on board the transports
[721] with the greatest readiness. . . ." None of the men were
tried or confined. Seaforth, as their colonel, set out with
them to India—although his fortune and title would have
allowed him ease at home, or the purchase of higher
military rank. His death on the long voyage contributed
to the men's "prostration of mind which made them
succumb more easily to the effects of disease", scurvy, of
which 230 out of 1100 fit men died before reaching Madras,
and others soon after. As we have told, the survivors
fought with disciplined courage.

175 To a chief, recruitment was financially important, for
702 he, and not only the recruits, received a handsome bounty.
Simultaneously it provided him with a commission with-
614 out the cost of purchase—previous training and promotion
being considered unnecessary. The clansmen knew these
facts of bounty and command, and generally responded to
an appeal. When Stewart of Garth was recruiting for the
Ross-shire Regiment, a band of young Lewismen joined it
for half the bounty offered by a Lowland regiment!

175 702 The families of the young men might be willing to encourage enlistment. But they pled or bargained for an assurance that after service was over their sons should be returned to their homes and have land on which to settle down. The receipt of the bounty and their savings would help the men to pay rent later.

175 Passive resistance was offered at times, however, as
702 when the Macleod Highlanders were raised in 1757, only
a decade after the 'Forty-five. An Island friend has told
668 me of a family tradition, that, as a young man at that time,
his own great-grandfather was concealed to escape conscription.
And the press gang was busy in Stornoway
when the *Old Statistical Account* was written. Protest had
usually to be made in secrecy or silence; but a revolt was
[533] organised by Stornoway men in 1793.[1] And the voice of
one unwilling conscript has come down to us in a song,
well known in the Isles (though little known in English),
with the refrain—*Och ho ro*, brown lad, so bonnie (*'ille*
175 *dhuinn*). Although it bears no sign of Jacobitism, it begins,
702 "My grief to be wearing King George's red clothing!"
It continues, "The short-coated sailors bore us to Holland.
668 It was a Saturday evening when we fought; and many a
539 wife was widowed ere dawn broke on the Lord's Day, their
husbands ta'en, whom gold can never restore, stretched out
among the rushes, blood pouring over their shoulders. . . .

'O'er the hills bear my greeting to Mull of the mountains;
Where cuckoos are cooing, on the braes before Beltane.'

'Bear my greeting to my mother, who nurtured me, to my sister who weeps for me, and to my sweetheart; I'll be home if death spares me."[2]

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[1] Public Record Office, H.O. 50/2. Letters of Francis Humberstone Mackenzie (16th and 19th May 1793), communicated by Mr. J. R. Western.

[2] Charles Stewart, *The Killin Collection*.

175 Such are the mingled traditions of the Highland
701 regiments which served in so many wars, for right or for
wrong. Of all the desperate alternatives before the Gael
[614] —famine at home, semi-slavery in the factory towns, death-stricken sea voyages, pioneering in the forested hills of
Eastern North America, or war, it was this last which
offered the men not only the trappings and glamour of
clanship but continuing fellowship. In the regiment a
Gael was among friends. Modern civilisation offered him
no other life promising social continuity and the hope of a
return to croft and township, " if death should spare him ".

175 It would be wrong to suggest that only the gentry could
701 rise to command, for as English and literacy were acquired,
the sons of small tenants received commissions. British
565 military discipline has too often driven a breach between
554 the men and the non-commissioned officers, spoiling the
[703] latter's fitness for higher leadership. But among Highlanders " the bond of faith and affection " led naturally to
commissioned rank. For generations, historic precedent
[178] was carried on in living tradition.[1] Given education, the
sons of Island crofters have risen to command on land and
[871] sea; but education came late.

CONCLUSION

175 Thus in the 'little commonwealths' of the farm-hamlets
621 grouped within the township, personal right and equal
shares were balanced by common duty, summed up in the
631 principle of duty-right or coir.
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[1] The tradition of leadership calls for review but here one can only cite examples. For instance, descendants of his neighbours in Strath Spey told me that my paternal grandfather, as a penniless lad speaking Gaelic and English (in which he was literate), enlisted in the Black Watch about 1829. He was known as a N.C.O. for his power of quiet, reasoning discipline. He thrice refused the offer of a commission, which was then given to others, of whom more than one rose to high command in the battalion.

175 principle of duty-right or *coir*. Further, in so far as chief
614 and people claimed unity as the children, the clan, of one
577 ancestor, they had crystallised a fair ideal, realised by an
621 exchange of services ('cuideachy'). Gaelic clanship was not without its Lowland counterpart in 'kindness' which linked those of one 'kind'—'kinsfolk' and neighbours—to their ferm-toun and parish, to one another, and to the laird. Tyranny and betrayal by chief and laird make one share the bitterness of grief once felt as competition for scarce land broke up 'kindness'. Yet the people's endeavour and attainment in the past give hope for the future.

175 All have heard of the hereditary Highland chief and
many have read of the gentlemen-farmers, but too few
614 have heard of team and crew, and township-parliament.
621 It is time we learned not only of the aristocratic chief but
622 of the chosen helmsman and the democratic constable. So long as the fallacy is repeated that the Highlanders "never co-operated, and could not act together except under the orders of a chief", so long will it be easy to add, "and they never will"! Historic truth may have much to teach
[642] for the renewal of leadership for life together. And beyond the Highlands, the example of this aristo-democracy, at its worst and its best, may contribute to new concepts of community.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

771 (221) [796] As in every form of religion rooted in communal life, the sacraments and prayers of the Gael were linked to labour and to the phases of life's cycle. While some of the 'runes' or prayers were essentially personal and others were breathed only in the closest intimacy, many were shared by a group of families: the tried team of the men or women of a joint farm, the people of a (621) neighbourhood and township or wider group. The communities being so small and isolated, their members depended greatly upon themselves and upon one another. [794] As in worship in common, so in healing of body or spirit and in the invocation of grace upon youth, now one, now another might lead in praise and prayer. So, too, the leader of a little team would lead in the dedication of their work, and, when it was completed, be 'the consecrator' of its fruit.

771 794 Where no clergy were at hand, neighbours, perforce, practised the saying of one they called their 'foster-brother': that if no more than "two of you agree on earth about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three have gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matt.

771 xviii. 19-20). The worldly wise might think that the
794 spiritual fare of these poor folk must have been lean indeed;
while others, having heard much of the Highlanders'
[173] 'pagan' superstitions, may think even worse! The evi-
[538] dence from which to judge is found in survivals from a
rich lore, and for most readers seen but 'darkly' through
prose translations from the poetry of a tongue now known
to few.

771 The richest collection is Alexander Carmichael's *Car-*
538 *mina Gadelica* (*Ortha nan Gaidheal*).[1] Others were made
by the Rev. Fr. Allan Macdonald of Eriskay, and by the
Rev. Kenneth Macleod with Mrs. M. Kennedy-Fraser in
the *Songs of the Hebrides*. Included here are unpublished
verses given by crofter-friends in the Isles and others from
Fr. Allan Macdonald's collection,[2] hitherto untranslated.
What still remains has come down to us only by narrow
771 escapes. One is reminded of 'Father Allan's' early
539 death, after nursing his parishioners through an epi-
demic; and Carmichael's escape from drowning as "on

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113 [1] *Carmina Gadelica: Ortha Nan Gaedheal.* Hymns and incantations
114 with illustrative notes on words, rites and customs, dying and obsolete: orally collected in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and translated into English; vols. i and ii (1st ed., 1900; 2nd ed., 1928); vol. iii, 1940; vol. iv, 1941. The last two volumes were edited by the collector's grandson, Prof. James Carmichael Watson, whose death as an Ordinary Seaman in war is mourned by his friends, and has been described as a disaster to the cause of Gaelic, and of humane learning in Scotland. One more volume edited by James C. Watson awaits publication. (In the following, quotations are referred to as from *Carmina*, followed by the number of the rune: Nos. 1-216, vols. i and ii; and Nos. 217-351, vol. iii. Vol. iv contains varied lore.)

[2] Of all these four, the least known is Fr. Allan Macdonald's little collection, *Comh-Chruinneachadh de Laoidhean Spioradail*, Hugh Macdonald, Oban, 1893. It was privately printed, and lacks a translation and table of contents. There could be no finer memorial to this man and the community whose spiritual life he helped to record than a new edition of all its ancient Gaelic 'spiritual songs', with the addition of others he wrote down before his death in 1905, and perhaps, of some of his own poems, notably his famous *Eilean na h-òige*, "Isle of the Young".

771 539 a night of black mistiness ... . he waded nearly breast-high" through the dangerous South Ford of Benbecula, "conscious only of the roll and the singing of waters and the rhythm of a poem he had taken down a few hours before"—"The Invocation of the Graces", so nearly lost with him! Much that Carmichael learned was given him under a seal of confidence he never broke, although he mourned the loss this meant. The confidence he inspired—which even those who knew him only in their childhood remember for life—was a source of his quiet, unfailing power.

796 794 [221] The following begins with the runes and rites of labour, throughout the day, week and year, on land and sea and at home. Turning to the day of rest and to congregational worship, one must enquire as to the presence of the clergy, and question closely how far the people had access to the Bible throughout the centuries: were they really cut off from its riches, from its essence, as the Reformers and the Evangelicals of last century asserted with such vehemence? One can then turn to the runes and rites which opened the phases of life, from birth to maturity, marriage and parenthood, leading at last to life's close.

128 181 771 [121] But no social inheritance is without its burden. Having told of the foundations of faith, something must be said in the next chapter of the negative or superstitious side of Island belief, of temptations and evils which the people could face, and of others to which they submitted in ignorance. From the evidence of faith and wisdom, or error, one must attempt some evaluation of attainment by single souls and by the community, and of the power and fullness of life in common.

CH. VII SPIRITUAL LIFE OF COMMUNITY

(A) SACRAMENTS AND RUNES OF LABOUR, IN FAMILY, TEAM AND TOWNSHIP

788 221 Labour given to the winning of food, shelter and clothing was begun and blessed by poetic, rhythmic prayers or 'runes'. The words were usually reinforced by a symbolic gesture or simple rite. By help of the runes the people sought spiritual preparation for work, invoked aid and finally consecrated the thing made for use.

221 461 [171] Wherever work was rhythmic it was carried on by working songs. Songs of hunting or herding recalled the hill and pasture, or praised the landscape with an exuberant flow unequalled in any tongue we know but old Irish, with which Scots Gaelic is so closely linked, or Welsh, of which the nature classics are linked to the epics of the sixth and seventh century thought to be composed in Strathclyde.[1]

788 461 [171] Yet it was not these but the rhythmic prayers or runes which initiated labour, stage by stage. They are paralleled among many peoples, but those of the Gael possess rare fullness of meaning and beauty of imagery, words and form. When labour was ended, the food won or the clothing made was consecrated for the use of family and friends, of the poor and the stranger-guest.

788 241 In the struggle for food, the sowing and reaping of corn ranked highest, followed by its parching and grinding (*Carmina*, Nos. 88-92). The preparation of seed for its sowing was accompanied by its consecration, *an coisreageadh sioil*. Similarly for reaping: "Laying his bonnet on the ground, the father of the family took up his sickle and,

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[113] [1] Examples of these nature poems are given in scholarly prose translation by Kenneth H. Jackson (1937 and 1950). Songs with their melodies will be found in Arthur Geddes (Ed.), *The Songs of Craig and Ben*, vol. i, 1951.

788 facing the sun, he cut a handful of corn. Putting the
241 handful three times round his head, the man raised the
'*Iollach Buana*', reaping salutation,—and the whole family
[175] then took up the strain." While these notes by Carmichael
describe the custom after the abolition of the farm-team,
[178] he also tells of "all the people of the Townland going
together to reap" (*Carmina*, No. 89, cf. Note to No. 90).
In the days of close partnership this was no doubt a team
blessing, said by the chief reaper among his neighbours in
mutual aid.

782 Grace before meals survives in Presbyterian house-
264 holds; and ancient graces are recorded in *Carmina*, vol. iii.
The unpublished examples given here are from Miss Annie
[114] Johnston (or NicIain), Barra, to whose knowledge Gaelic
lore owes so much:

1. O God, bless our portion, and our people.
2. O God, be about the beginning of our life (or food) and about the end of our life (*lit.* of our world).
3. O God, let nothing enter our bodies that may harm our souls.

A Dhia, beannaich ar cuid 'us ar cuideachd.
A Dhia, bi mu thus ar bithe (or *bidhe*)
'us mu dheireadh ar saoghail.
A Dhia, na leig dad 'n ar coluinn a ni lochd do'r n'anam.[1]

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[114] [1] The reader will note the meaning in translation; but he should also
[192] scan the Gaelic, and the assonance of the vowels. In the first and shortest there is a simple play upon sound and meaning: *ar cuid 'us cuideachd*—" our share (of things) and our (share of) people, friends and family". In the second, Miss Johnston thinks there may be a play upon the words 'life' and 'food' (of which the sound is almost the same), reminding one that food is the means of life and of all that life means. In the third the apposition of ideas is characteristically emphasised in the pattern of the accented vowels in the words "*dad 'n ar coluinn a ni lochd do'r n-anam*"; here again the form, by means of which it sank through the senses into the heart, marks its native origin. Contrast with these the translation into Gaelic of a common English Grace. As in the English original, its prose lacks poetic form: *Tha sinn a toirt taing dhuit, A Thigearna, airson nan tiodhlaicean a tha Do mhathas a' buileachadh oirnn, troimh Iosa Criosda ar Tighearna.* Amen.

782 The care of cattle was accompanied by prayer. As an
233 Eriskay housewife said to me, she would never leave her
cow tethered without a murmured, " Saint Columba be herding you" (*Buachaille a'Chaluim-cille ort*). The curing of animal sickness, as of human ailments, was accompanied by prayers. And prayer was used to avert the evil eye, symbol of suspicions born of unreasoning fear which, psychologists tell us, beset the modern but little less than the ancient! The thought or act of prayer which links a man to his fellow-men links him to the dumb beasts. " The man who is merciful to a soul will not be merciless to a brute " (*Am fear a bhitheas trocaireach ri anam, cha bhith e mithrocaireach ri bhruid*).

796 Throughout Christendom each task of the annual
171 rhythm was marked, at its start and close, by a day of
seasonal festival (*Lá Feill*). These Christian festivals replaced
779 earlier celebrations and continued some of their
features, often in play. Yet concerted seasonal activities could not be related to the supreme festival of the Christian Church, Easter, owing to its movable date. This is one reason for the great importance of other, fixed Festivals to
[114] rural community life. This point, not always appreciated
by latter-day individualism, is made clear by M. M. Banks in describing *British Calendar Customs*, vol. i, *Scotland*
175 (1937). Remembering that the Old Style Calendar dates
178 were ten days later than the New Style (when officially
adopted in Scotland in 1600), they may be compared with
796 the annual rhythm of climate and labour (Fig. 9). Until
1600, the New Year began in spring on 25th March. After the Reformation and the abolition of Christmas or Noel, *Nollaig*, New Year's Day on 1st January took its place as the day which, in the Protestant Highlands and Lowlands, still keeps alive some of the old friendly visiting and

175 'first-footing'. In the past the lads came in bands singing
796 carols, and once admitted—refusal of hospitality being out
of the question—any misunderstandings and quarrels of
178 the past year had to be forgiven and forgotten. With individual visits this is no longer possible, for though these maintain friendship, they cannot easily and naturally heal a quarrel.

175 From Lewis three fine carols once sung by youths are
796 recorded, of which the fidelity of Carmichael's translation goes far to render both sense and feeling (Nos. 55-57).[1]
533 In Ness I have sought in vain for the old melodies from
[127] the descendants of Angus Gunn. Born about 1800, Gunn had lived for many years as a shepherd on the islet of North Rona, unreached by the burning zeal of the Evangelists, so that his traditional piety survived. Could they be found, these melodies would enrich the remnant of authentic Christian lore in Britain, for even the well-known English carols are mostly of modern reconstruction.

The first Christmas Hail opens, "*Ho Ri*, Hail to the King, Blessed is He. . . . Blessed be the house and all therein. . . . Lasting . . . and healthy round the hearth be ye. . . ." It goes on, "This night is the eve of the great Nativity, the great Noel [*Nochd oidhche Nollaige moire* . . .]; Born is the Son. . . ." It closes, "Shone the mountains . . . earth, and land, Heard was the wave upon the strand. . . . Blessed be the King . . . to all ages, to all time." A fragment from Tolsta, Lewis, sung by boys on New Year's Eve as they begged for a Noel bannock from house to house, latterly began and ended with playful nonsense, yet it retained its traditional climax: "[On the first day of the New Year] I saw the Threesome [The Trinity] going to the shore. The land shone, the

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[113] [1] No. 59 is set to an Eriskay chant in *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. i, p. 159.

175 earth shone, The wave shone on the shore; The deer of
796 the mountain steep shone. . . ." [1]

533 "The Christ Child's Lullaby" is a lovely carol narrating the Christmas tale. Legend tells that it was sung by
175 'Mary-Mother' herself to an unwanted stepchild lost on
796 the moors, where his stepmother found him in the arms
533 of Mary, who sang as she lulled him. The stepmother
773 cherished this song with the lost child, henceforth loved as her own.[2] The poetry of the Gael, like the odes of Greece and the Psalms of the Hebrews, is luminous with the vision of mountains, land and sea, reflecting a light within that of sun or moon, and sonorous with the rhythm of wave, tide and season which are "of all ages and to all time,
[181] *gach linn gu brath*". Its adoration is full of nature and of humanity, yet it soars above mere nature worship or anthropomorphism.

175 While Christmas, more than any, was a festival of
796 leisure, others were closely linked to labour. The festival dates of Candlemas or Lent, of Saint Bride's, Saint Patrick's or Lady Day, marked the stages of spring's coming and the duties they brought. Summer came in at Beltane—held in May, though the word included other dates connected with spring fire; and on St. John's Day

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113 [1] Donald Macdonald, M.A., MS. essay for the Royal Scot. Geog. Society.

[2] A short version is published in the *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. i. A translator may choose from its 29 stanzas—though all are true to the Gospel and worth translation. Of the simple choral variant of the air (as published) Fr. Allan Macdonald told Miss Amy Murray his grief that it had superseded the melodic variety given to the Lullaby when sung by one singer at a time (*Celtic Review*, 1905–6). From three variants noted from oral singing one can arrange a melodic sequence. To pass from a major variant (set to stanzas on Jesus's mother, the shepherds and the 'kings') to minor variants (set to the tale of Herod's evil deeds) restores much of the dramatic intensity of this noble carol. Only deep feeling for the Gospels could create and maintain, without written help, so full a version of the words and variety of associated melody. (The complete words, *Taladh Chriosta*, are in Fr. Allan Macdonald's collection, p. 7.)

175 at midsummer came joyous departure to the shielings.
796 Michaelmas at the end of September was a festival of
horsemanship, when the ponies, rested and well fed, could
race madly along the machar. As long nights brought in
the winter, Hallowe'en came on 31st October, and on the
morrow the solemnity of All Hallows (*Samhain*). On
11th November came St. Martin's Day, and in December
Christmas once again.

175 When the Islesmen put out to sea, prayers were chanted
782 to Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to the Disciples, " the
Fishers of Men ". While some of these might be individual
(*Carmina*, Nos. 117-120), others were chanted by the
skipper at the helm, as celebrant, the crew giving the
[178] responses (No. 121). As self-sustained community life
weakened and customs were endangered, this prayer was
[779] encouraged by a few clergy, Catholic and Protestant. At
175 the start of the season's fishing in Eriskay, Fr. Allan
Macdonald went out in the boats and chanted a rune taught
226 to him by elders, the men responding.[1] One of the ' Ocean
788 Blessings ' or prayers recorded by Carmichael (No. 119)
is found in Bishop Carswell's *Liturgy in Gaelic*, of 1569,
and is quoted by Martin as " a form of prayer used by
many of the islanders at sea after the sails are set ".[2] Most
of Carswell's *Liturgy* was translated from that of John
Knox, but not this prayer, of which the earlier and later-recorded
version are the same, except for one revealing
difference.

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[178] [1] In so doing, ' Father Allan ' may have been restoring a pious service of an older school of Gaelic priests trained upon the College of Lismore, an island in Loch Linnhe. Lismore was the birthplace of Carmichael, and in the home of his Protestant parents the young priests were hospitably received.

[2] *Foirm nan Urnaighthe* (ed. M'Lauchlan), 240, and Martin, 1703 (edition of 1934, pp. 186-189). A new text of Carswell is in preparation by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society.

175 226 788 773 As recorded by Carswell (and Martin), this prayer, after calling upon the Trinity, tells that the Three-in-One, ever living, guided Clan Israel through the Red Sea, brought Jonah to land from the belly of the great ocean beast, and led Paul and his companions from the torment of the sea; after these three stanzas it closes with a general supplication. As heard by Carmichael three centuries after Carswell, the first three stanzas are identical, but they are [539] followed by the culmination. Recalling the hour "when the storm poured on the Sea of Galilee . . .", the poem goes on, "Be Thou, King of the elements, seated at our helm, And lead us in peace to our voyage's end. . . ." It is significant that the Reformation Liturgy includes the story of Clan Israel's flight from their enemy whose drowning forms the climax of the tale, and the absurd miracle of the whale—a late interpolation in the convincing original Hebrew poem on Jonah's voyage,[1]—but that it omits the Christian climax, of the storm allayed by Christ, the Helmsman of peace.

[539] Another fishers' rune (No. 120) concludes, "To whom trembles the voice of the wind? To whom become tranquil strait and ocean? To Jesus Christ, Chief of each saint, Son of Mary, Root of Victory." These blessings, though they refer to the Old Testament, dwell lovingly on the New. Their thought is of the fishermen friends, Peter, Andrew and John, of the Baptist and of Christ's mother, of Saint Martin and later apostles to the Gael, and the Archangels, and of Christ, Rock of rocks (*Carraig Ail*), and the Trinity. 226 778 These bring strength in danger, peace after strife with the elements, remembrance of the poor, and fellowship to the crews. Peace and strength pervade the "Dawn Prayer of

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[1] R. G. Moulton, *Modern Reader's Bible* (reissue, 1925, pp. 1423-1424; cf. Note to Matt. xii. 40, p. 1696).

788 Clanranald " [1] and echo in the opening benediction of
226 Alexander Macdonald's " *Birlinn* of Clanranald ", without
which his ' Galley ', for all the glory of its strife with
storm, would never have won its place in the heart of the
seafaring Gael.

788 As for journeys over sea, so for those over land, " Traversing
corries, traversing forests, traversing valleys, long
484 and wild . . .", the traveller or pilgrim, the drover or
emigrant, leaving home and his friends, would have their
prayers. They would accompany him on the first steps
of his way with cheer and laughter or with tears, as those
have told me who remembered my grandfather's leaving
[539] his home in Strath Spey more than a century ago. These
journey-blessings were spoken by the traveller: " Life be
in my speech, sense in what I say . . .", or by those to
whom he was dear. (*Carmina*, No. 116; *Guidheachan
Turais*, Nos. 266-276.) In these prayers, bodily travel
and spiritual quest are sustained on the mountain-track by
the strength of home-ties and fellowship, and by the hospitality
of Christians on the path ahead.

788 When family and neighbour-team were closely knit,
574 their own harmony drew the stranger in. " The Rune of
Hospitality ", threaded together from old fragments by
the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, breaks out into the refrain
of the lark as she sings to the listening heart of the host:
[539] " Many, a many, a many a time, Comes the Christ in the
stranger's guise! " [2] Hospitality is truest when its sacrifice—so
real in a land of poverty—is given as a duty but
with a smile!

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[1] *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. i, pp. ix-x.

[2] " *Gur minig, a minig, a minig* . . . ! " " *Duan na h-aoigheachd* ". (*An Gaidheal*, Dec. 1942.)

(B) SACRAMENTS OF THE HEARTH AND THE PLAIDING

788 For shelter and life by the hearth there are noble runes.
592 The house with its household was blessed, when newly
built by a bridegroom's friends, yearly after its thatching,
[356] or regularly at nightfall. The blessing was said by the
goodman in the presence of his family and helper-neighbours, or intimately by either of the parents as they went to rest (*Carmina*, Nos. 44, 45).

In the darkness of the 'black house' the fire was a
[354] centre of warmth and light, of life and union. "The
Blessing of the Living" (the Fire) was said by the housewife as she rekindled or, rather, uncovered the sleeping
788 embers when she rose. Those who, tired or in want,
592 have ever lit a fire in darkness may best feel, in her words,
how the glow without kindles the light within.
354

> 539 "I will kindle my fire today in presence of the angels . . .
> Without malice . . . or fear . . . of any one under the sun,
> But the Holy Son of God to shield me."

And then (as the dim glow lightens and warms): "God, kindle Thou in my heart within, A flame of love to my neighbour, To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all, To the brave, to the knave, to the thrall. . . . From the lowliest thing that liveth To the name that is highest of all (*Gu ruig an t-Ainm is airde*)." In spirit this reaches universality; its verse-form is purest poetry (*Carmina*, No. 82).

For the covering, smothering or smoo'ring of the embers at night, the following was said to me not long ago

788 (in Gaelic) by a housewife in a Catholic isle, as our friend-
592 ship matured. It had been said nightly at her fire by her
354 father-in-law until his death (not long before), which had
539 come after that of his wife. "I smoo'r the fire tonight,
As Mary's Son smoo'red. Be it well with house and fire; Be it well with all our household. Who are on this floor? Peter and Paul. Who are on watch tonight? Light-white Mary and her Son. Thus God's voice taught, And the Angel spoke: The Angel at my house door, Until the clear day come tomorrow. Amen." As this variant shows, memory still lives in the Isles.[1]

788 In these runes, the key to the words "as Mary's Son
593 and as Mary did, in their day" is the example of filial duty,
776 of wifely and motherly care. In spite of lapses to 'Mario-
latry' during periods of decadence in the Roman Church,
[779] the virtual banishment of Christ's mother from Protestantism has led to a loss deeper than Presbyterian Scotland has yet realised. Her name was a daily reminder, both of a woman's part in the spiritual life of the home, and of a son's self-discipline and affection: in a word, of mutual love.

788 For wool, the sheep were blessed, as in the "Clipping
[236] Blessing". There were blessings of the loom and of
warping and weaving; and after neighbourly fulling or
[286] 'waulking' of the finished web, came its consecration.
[461] As the work was solitary and communal in turn, so the
prayer. Carmichael's own fine prose translations should be
[127] studied (*Carmina*, vol. i, Nos. 108-113; cf. vol. iv, pp.
[538] 88-99). Yet, those being available, we quote rhythmic

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[113] [1] Cf. Rev. Allan Macdonald, *Comh-chruinneachadh*, p. 107; *Carmina* (Nos. 84-87, 324-326); and M. Kennedy-Fraser, *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. ii, p. 31. Sacred lore is not to be picked up lightly by a stranger. It was only upon the second of my prolonged stays under her hospitable roof that this good woman would admit and impart her knowledge, treasured in the secret places of her heart.

788

538 versions to suggest the significant poetic form of the
original.

788 "The Clipping Blessing", being addressed to creatures,
236 is simple in thought and form, and its opening may be
rendered:

O come back woolly, though now you're shorn,
By May, may each a lamb have borne,
May lovely Bride you endow,
And Mary fair sustain you now!

[825] It goes on to beg protection from wolf and bear, as well
[538] as fox, hoodie crow and eagle, and closes with the opening
couplet.

236 From start to finish the work must be true. The wool
461 is from the sheep they reared—it is not got by 'thigging',
as a landlord takes 'gifts' from poor tenants; the yarn is
sound with no odds of thread from worn-out cloth; the
web is their very own, not the clergyman's due (*Carmina*,
786 110, 113, 109). Only so can the goodwife's web be beauti-
788 ful, and blest. "Thrums nor odds of thread, my hand
never kept nor shall keep. Every hue in the bow-of-the-
[539] shower has gone through my fingers beneath the cross."
The weaver, with her household cares and her bairns about
[593] her, to be clear in mind must be calm in heart as, thread by
[796] thread, she prepares her warp. To start, she chooses Saint
Columba's Day.

[539] Thursday of blessings
For warping and waulking,
Thrice fifty strands
To number . . .

Ward away the evil eye!
Or evil will, or aught awry,
Consecrate, O Lord on High,
My Loom . . .

286 Make smooth and even the warp of my loom
788 And grant thy blessing, God, on me,
539 On all who here find shelter and room
And dwelling . . .

Thine arm be round each woman here
Who waulks this web of mine,
O aid her in her hour of need . . .

Keep the flock that we may win
Sweet and nourishing milk to drink
And wool to give, to weans and kin,
For wear!

Even now in Harris or the Lews, a brief good wish may be uttered—a " Health and strength to the wearers! " as the perspiring women end the waulking; but in the past the web was finally consecrated. Each of the family who was to wear a portion of it was named by the weaver herself, who led the consecration (*Carmina*, No. 113).

May the well-loved wearer of my web
Never be wounded . . .
May the sanctuary shield of the Lord be his. . . .

286 The significance of this gift of hard-won cloth can now
532 be seen, first for the family but next for the neighbourly
614 team. We can understand how each ' set ' or pattern of
tartan stood for the spirit of the family and the group of
[593] kin and homeland, the clan. We conceive what it meant
[621] to the Gael when the tartan, with " the Highland dress
. . . or any part of it whatsoever ", was forbidden " to
[291] any man or boy " in the Highlands. Women were still
allowed to wear it, it was true, but the dress ceased to be
a symbol of community when its wear was confined to
[714] one sex. As a single exception, the Highland dress was
[175] retained for soldiers, but the militarisation of the tartan—
though it seized upon one strand of clanship, that of

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286

532 warfare—destroyed its intimate tie with the home, with
614 peace. The web the women had dyed, spun, woven and
waulked together ceased to be a sacrament when the tartan
714 was proscribed to men except when worn as a uniform with
[178] " England's cruel red ".

[648] The framers of this law, which stood on the statute
book for over forty years, took full cognisance of what they
175 did. Appended to the Act of 1747 was an oath which
648 reversed every benediction said by the women at their
work: " I . . . do swear, as I shall answer to God at
286 the great day of judgment, I have not, nor shall have, any
291 gun, sword, pistol or arm whatever, and never use tartan,
782 plaid or any part of the Highland garb; and if I do,
may I be cursed in my undertaking, family and property—
641 may I never see my wife and children, father, mother,
relations—may I be killed in battle as a coward and be without Christian burial in a strange land, far from the graves of my forebears and kindred; may this come across me if I break my oath ". This Act, as law and symbol, struck full at the sacramental life of family, neighbour-team and clan community, in which labour and prayer had been indissolubly bound.[1]

(c) WORSHIP, CONGREGATIONAL AND PERSONAL: THE BOOK AND THE WORD

178 Little remains of the tradition of worship in the tiny
771 oratories, chapels or ' temples ' whose ruins stud the shores

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346 [1] The collaboration of friends in Lewis may allow mention of the Gaelic
version of A. Geddes, *The Spirit of the Tartan, a Song Drama* (English
172 Version); *Souvenir Programme and Book of Songs* (Outlook Tower, Edinburgh, 1932). In this the spirit of this labour sequence embodied in its
[113] songs and runes is dramatised in its setting of custom and history. The Gaelic version was prepared by the generous labours of James Thomson, M.A., Bayble, and the late Duncan Macdonald, M.A., Sandwick, Lewis.

172 of the Isles, and in which the people met, though far from
178 any clergy. On the southern mainland most trace of
346 shrines and chapels seems to have been lost, so small are
[771] the rings of unhewn stone that marked their sites. Little
was recorded by salaried clergy about the services conducted
175 there; those who approved tended to let well alone. Hence
814 written accounts have come down chiefly from those who
were out of touch with rural needs or ignorant of the
language spoken in intimacy, and whose alien training had
[217] removed them from sympathy.[1] As for those whose private
interests, stipend or subservience to patrons bound them
to prelate, lord or king, they roundly condemned free
congregations.

175 Nevertheless, fragmentary records have come down,
814 such as those of Martin, who visited St. Kilda in 1697 and
described the little church where the people still kept a
771 fine brass crucifix and worshipped together, without the
[184] presence of a clergyman. Naturally, the curiosity stimulated by St. Kilda's fabulous isolation led Martin to describe its little community more fully than any other; but
he mentions similar worship elsewhere. Thus in lonely
North Rona, inhabited by only five families, Martin had

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[133] [1] The difficulty of initiation to intimate usages of language is exemplified in a scholarly and patriotic work, the *Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (Gaelic-English, and English-Gaelic) by Malcolm Maclennan, D.D., 1925.
[192] This standard work incorporates all the words of three previous dictionaries, with many additions. Yet key words of the people's religious heritage, of immemorial age, of living usage, and recorded a generation or so before in the collections cited here, are either absent, or are given the more prosaic or debased of two shades of meaning (not the *higher*). See "*caim*, a case, sheath" or *shrine*; "*tionnsgann*, a beginning" (a *dedication*); *earna*, *Hail* or *salutation;* "*ora*, *orra*, or *ortha*, a charm . . . amulet . . . or imposture of any kind . . . Irish . . . prayer in verse—from Latin, *oratio*" (why prayer in 'Irish' only?); and other vital words. According to this scholarly dictionary, the title of the supreme Scottish collection of Gaelic religious tradition, Carmichael's *Ortha nan Gaidheal* (Latin, *Carmina Gadelica*), is to be translated, not *Prayers*, but "*Charms* . . . or Impostures . . . of the Gael"!

175 visited the chapel of St. Rona. It was fenced, and was
814 swept every day, suggesting daily worship; and the Lord's
771 Prayer, Creed and Ten Commandments were repeated
there every Sunday morning. This led Martin to say that
[788] the people had no vices; and indeed the Gael's own
prayers insist upon the beauty of virtues rather than on
the evil of vices. In Lewis at that time (1695) there were
two ministers, at Stornoway and at Barvas; and the Barvas
minister visited Rona yearly. Isolated though they were
from their fellow-Lewismen, the Rona folk thus had annual
contact with organised religion, such as was lacking even
on the main island during periods of stress in Scotland.
[648] Invasions, repeated destruction and prolonged intrigue by
the Norsemen or the English Kings, led to, and intensified,
[798] internal strife. And in Lewis forty years of warring interregnum
had followed the 'Reformation'.

175 These and other notes of worship given by Martin,
771 such as those of the Lewismen's devotions when touching
at the Flannan Isles, show that the worshippers relied
798 greatly upon themselves and one another. They did so
even after their primitive Christian modes of worship had
been blamed and derided by Reformers, and the new modes
in their turn condemned by such ordained priests as secretly
made their way north from Armagh to Uist, Harris and
probably to Lewis. How much more stable must their
community's faith have been before the tragic upheavals
[797] which began at the Reformation. Some four centuries
earlier, the Roman Church supplanted the institutions
developed by the early Celtic missionaries from regional
and rural growth, by a formal organisation developed upon
an imperial and civic model. Thus they may already have
shaken faith by undermining the authority of communal
[795] sanctions and traditions. But the break caused by medieval

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771 Roman Catholicism was far less complete than that ultimately
brought about by Protestantism—Episcopalian or
778 Calvinist.

795 At least twenty-five churches, chapels and tiny oratories
are named by Martin in Lewis and his list is incomplete
175 (1934, p. 106). Harris and its islets also had their complement
346 of 'temples', in addition to the priory church of
Rodel. We may perhaps assume that before the Reformation
[162] Lewis had a population of some 4000 persons,
or 1000 families, and contained some thirty chapels or
[794] oratories in inhabited areas. If so, then one church or
'temple', on an average served thirty to thirty-five families,
or six or seven farm-groups. Yet only the larger congregations
at Eye, Stornoway, Ness or Uig and Rodel would
normally be served by clergy; the people of smaller congregations
would be without, for weeks and months or even
years.

175 When the people were too distant from priests (and
79 later ministers) to hear the Lessons, they handed down
the Word orally. Their power of retaining memorable
[153] thought, even in prose, is still remarkable; and verse
strengthened memory. For example, 'the Ten Commandments'
175 paraphrased in rhyme are recorded in Fr.
788 Allan Macdonald's little collection, "as given by the God
779 of graces to Moses in the wilderness" (*Na Faintean*,
p. 62). Moses, had he understood Gaelic, would have
protested at the omission of the Second Commandment,
but no sculptor of Iona, Rodel or Eye would have felt a
need for it, being unafraid that a Christian could bow
down to a golden calf. Believing, with Solomon, that a
craftsman's work is his prayer, the artist-monks held that
an 'image' should represent, though never replace, God's
creation, and may even quicken our concept of the Creator

175 in whose 'image' mankind was made. As for the number
779 ten, it was simply restored by subdividing the Tenth
788 Commandment into two parts! Thus the letter of the Mosaic Law, be it frankly admitted, is modified! There are also extensions of certain Commandments. Yet, recalling Jesus's insistence upon the unspoken thought which prompts man's conduct, one may feel that the blunt Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", is strengthened by the form of its paraphrase: "Avoid *all thought, or wish*, or deed immoral (*mi-bheusach*, immodest or vicious)". The Sixth becomes, "Commit no murder *nor sin of wrath*". And the paraphrase of the Fourth, rendered as "Keep the Lord's Day *and each festival*", completes the Commandment as it was obeyed by Jesus and His friends at the Passover, and by Celts and Romans at Easter. The memories of the people were impregnated with abiding truths from the Old Testament, and still more with the teaching and spirit of the Gospels.

175 All this was incorporated in their lives. As each
771 symbol of nature was truer to Gaelic worshippers because it was not borrowed but experienced, so their interpretation of the story of the Son of Man was the truer because they looked for Him among themselves. Spiritual fears are imaged from bodily perils they knew in the 'Roughbounds' and at sea; and spiritual ignorance is seen as a peat bog's 'black morass', not as a waterless desert beyond Jordan or the Dead Sea. Comfort is rarely suggested by the biblical 'shade from heat', but rather by the 'sun's
[796] mild healing rays'. When Christmastide, Old Style, brought lengthening days and mantled the Bens with snow, the glow upon their summits in earlier dawns told the
[776] Islesmen that the Light of the World was born again. In their thought Jesus shared their communal life with His

175 widowed mother and her family, working in farm and township,
771 sending merriment at Christmas, and comforting
776 sorrow at Easter or All Souls. And even as He had told the
Disciples to heal by faith, so, they thought, had He bidden
them. Who could have told the people, in their ignorance,
that in a later age they would suffer for this faith?

175 Thus upon the Lessons read in church (or out of doors)
771 and cherished as the root and stock of faith, there were
grafted three types of native shoot. These were the paraphrases,
78 the meditations or commentaries, and the parables
or legends. The paraphrases should need no justification
538 here, in so far as the four Gospels are each incomplete and
complementary—the Celtic clergy may have known the
fragments of a fifth; these 'fulfilled' the older Law and
the Prophets. Of the meditations, few would be censured
by a Protestant or Catholic theologian on points on which
both would agree; points of disagreement in the meditations
hardly concerned them. (Cf. in the Rev. Allan Macdonald's
collection, "Thoughts on Death", *Smaointean
air a' Bhas*, or *Carmina*, No. 7, and many more.) As a
theologian might criticise the parables, legends or marginal
tales of which so many were told in medieval Christendom,
a word should be said of these.

771 Legends were told of the appearance of Saints to believers,
such as that of "The Christ-Child's Lullaby", and
773 of the life of the Holy family. The Gaelic sense of parable
was strong (*Carmina*, vol. ii, Notes, *Caim*). In these legends
was expressed what the people themselves would have felt
and thought in joy or suffering. Legitimately, a preacher
suggests a motive or circumstance to bridge the gap in a
Bible record; the people did the same. When reverently
retold, some suggested circumstance would in time grow
to be a legend taking a place close to the Gospel story. A

771 single example may be given; so far as I know, it is un-
773 recorded. I learned it in South Uist, where Catholic and
[125] Protestant mingle in tolerance and sympathy; it had been
told by an old woman, a Catholic, to a young neighbour, a
[795] Protestant fisherman's son, later a minister.[1]

539 The story takes place after the Crucifixion. It may be
remembered that in the Gospels not a word is said of Jesus's
771 mother after His farewell to her from the Cross (John,
xix. 26). He—or she—who first conceived the legend may have asked, would not a mother visit the tomb of the son she had just lost? And surely she who at His birth had cried, "My soul magnifies the Lord . . . my Saviour", would be the first to seek Him out after His death? The legend tells that, on the second day of the Entombment, Mary, Jesus's mother, in an agony of mourning and suspense, visited the tomb of her son, calling upon Him with many an endearing name. From the tomb He answered that she would be consoled, for He would arise. And He told her that because of the depth of her love, of all forms of human love a mother's would be accounted the highest for ever after.

771 The Gael had fused the grandeur of the Old Testament
538 with the hope and humanity of the New; for them the
light of dawn on sea and snow awoke the light within. A
last example is taken from two fragments forming part of
[788] a single theme, perhaps of one original poem.[2] Chanted

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[113] [1] It is interesting to compare this quiet legend with the late Roman (and Episcopalian) "Apostles' Creed", apparently based on the vivid story in the *Gospel of Bartholomew*: after Christ "was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell" (hades). Montagu R. James (translator), *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 1924.

[2] *Carmina Gadelica*, 201, 197. No translation can be perfect, and Carmichael offers alternatives: line 6, "*Ti nan dul*, Being of life", or "of the elements"; l. 13, "light on the plain" or "the land", *fearann*. The last line is intimate and simple: "The hour (or era) God's Son came in (among us)," a *steach*, as into a dwelling.

538 as the days lengthened during Christmastide, old style,
it may be called " The Rune of the World's Light ".
788

The world, ere came the Son of God,
539 was black, a bog forlorn:
Void of sun, moon or star,
void of body, heart or form.

'Twas Mary Mother lowly kneeled,
and gave the Inmost Being birth;
Darkness and tears were driven afar,
the guiding star rose over earth.

Light on the land, the deep illumed
from sullen pool to ocean stream;
Grief was laid and joy was raised,
with praise and hail and harping free.

Light on the hills, light on the plains,
light o'er grey-green sea and firth;
Light o'er all the world as one,
the hour God's Son came down to earth.

(D) THE CYCLE OF LIFE

796 The stages in life's sequence are marked by noble
852 runes, of baptism, initiation in adolescence, betrothal and
marriage, childbirth, and of confession and consolation in
88 trials throughout life and, at its close, of farewell. As might
584 be fitting, the benedictions were given by either man or
woman: to a child by a parent or elder; to the young and strong by the wise; and by lovers to one another. And in the past, especially in trial, the 'soul-friend' ministered —*an anam-chara*, a neighbour chosen from lifelong friendships for steadfastness and understanding.

852 At birth a babe was baptized; and in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit the nurse placed three drops

852 of water on the child's forehead, successively invoking wisdom, peace and purity. Lay baptism, recognised by Greek, Latin, Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches, may be partly of pre-Christian communal origin. It retained special significance in isolated communities. Where a clergyman might come within eight days, a temporary name was given at birth: 'Tonsured of the Lord' (*Maoldomhnuich*) if a male child, and Gertrude (*Griadach*) if a female. Her immediate duties over after a safe delivery, the midwife forthwith became the celebrant or (as it were) lay priestess, and her neighbourly helpers, her acolytes. As the midwife intoned her part they gave the responses. "By the Book itself," said a reciter in Uist, for many years a skilled midwife, "ear has never heard music more beautiful than the music of the watching women when they are consecrating the seed of man and committing him to the great God of life." Those who care to ponder the thoughts then spoken may believe her word. (*Carmina*, Nos. 50 and 217-219.)

86 Initiation grew as understanding dawned and the babe passed on in childhood to be an older helper. Gaelic child-lore gives many a stimulus to an infant's intelligent apprehension of life about him, and to poetic appreciation. These may lead by natural steps to deeper things in adolescence. Homely teaching which led to a first communion, remained an intimate part of life in home and township.

814 From many parts of the Highlands and Isles, Car-
869 michael and his friends gathered variants of verse prayers
invoking graces in the young: Invocations of the Graces,
538 *Orachan Buadha* (*Buadh*, victory, achievement or grace;
867, Nos. 3 and 278-281). In Tiree, of which the thoughtful
minister had sent a fragment of verses to Carmichael,

814 the invocation was addressed to boys and girls, in Uist to
869 youths and maidens. The loveliest version of all had been
538 spoken by an old, evicted woman and learned from her by
867 a lad who, as a poor crofter in old age, passed it down for
record, for ever. Of this invocation Carmichael wrote, "Probably it was composed to a maiden on her marriage. The phrase '*eala dhonn*', brown swan, would indicate that the girl was young—not yet a white swan", a tender and delicate recognition of youth still to attain perfection.
869 Not a thought jars, each stanza building up the rising move-
538 ment of the whole. In the hundred lines of this poem, metre and assonance are regular except where growing intensity creates new rhythm and design; and the last vowel-rhyme of each stanza leads on to those of the next one, to form an unbroken ascent to the climax.[1]

869 The Invocation begins, "I bathe thy palms. . . . And
539 I place the nine pure choice graces in thy fair fond face.
867 The grace of form . . . of fortune . . . of goodness . . .
of wisdom . . . of charity . . . of choice maidenliness

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[114] [1] Certain critics, struck with the variety of the poem but missing its thought-sequence and unity of form, took Carmichael's note of 'many fragments' to imply that the poem was a composite version, piously restored by the editor—in spite of his statement that it was taken down from a single reciter (one Duncan Maclellan). Carmichael's spiritual power of evoking treasures from the reciters was inseparable from his utter honesty. And the publication, forty years later, of four Invocations and of scores of fragments (cf. No. 277) has added (to the internal evidence cited) further proof that the poem was no editorial assemblage. Without doubt, the poem has grown from the inspired meditation of generations of poet-worshippers in a hundred glens and isles. But the English reader should realise what the Gaelic ear may hear: this poem forms an organic unity; though many petalled it is a single flower. Readers familiar with medieval or earlier chants know that the enumeration of attributes is a feature common to all, whether in Church Latin or other tongues, as in the English medieval hymn beginning, "God in my head, and in my understanding". In Gaelic, however, the richness and freedom of the vowel-pattern and rhythms carries the thought onward, wave on wave to its climax. A foremost poet of France, Pierre Emmanuel, to whom I introduced this poem, exclaimed, "This is a Christian Song of Songs!"

869 . . . of whole-souled loveliness . . . of winning speech."
539 Then, after the tender image of the brown swan and fare-
867 well on departure to a new home, comes a string of exquisite comparisons: to shade and shelter in need, to safety of isle and strength of fortress, to gift of health for the ailing. Each grace, each image, expresses not simply individual qualities but relationships and service for others. After eight choice lines in praise of the girl's womanly gifts—from "Thine is the faith of Mary", through chosen attributes of Bride, the Fairy Woman, Penelope, Emir, Darthula and Maeve, to "the charm of the sweet singer (*Binne-bheul*)"—the poem, in Gaelic that is sonorous and succinct, passes beyond the sphere of comparison with things or even personal qualities. It acclaims her joyous girlhood as one with the powers of life-giving, life-abundant things, and as a reflection of the Divine:

Thou'rt the joy in every delight,
Thou the sunbeam's radiant light;
Thou'rt the gate of a welcoming chief,
Thou the clearest star to lead;
Thou'rt the step of the deer on a height,
Thou the pace of a steed ere the fight;
Thou'rt the calm of a gliding swan;
of longings thou'rt the loveliness.

The lovely likeness of the Lord
Is in thy pure face,
The loveliest form
Was ere on earth.[1]

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538 192 [1] Poetic form is integral to the conception; hence this translation in verse. But alternatives to Carmichael's choice of English prose may complement his own, in bringing out the meaning. Line 1, 'joy', *sonas*—and a 'delightful or wonderful thing', *ni éibhinn*; l. 3, *dorus*, doorway; l. 4, *iùl*, guidance, land-mark, way; l. 6, *steud*, steed, would imply, in *blàr*, 'a field' of battle, and, by contrast, l. 7, *sèimh eal*, calm (rather than 'grace') of a floating, swimming swan; l. 8, *rùn*, secret inclination, longing, and hence too, a person beloved; ll. 9, 11, *cruth*, form, shapeliness (and by implication),

539 And so, after every good wish for days, years and life,
867 the Invocation closes: " Peter has come and Paul " . . .
869 the Disciples and the Archangels. . . . Jesus the mild and
the Spirit of guidance have come,

> And the King of kings has come on the helm,
> To bestow on thee their affection and their love,
> *A bhaireadh duit-se graidh us ruin.*

The ideal of choice maidenliness which this Invocation
portrays, culminates in the thought of the loveliness that
867 was Christ. It rises, too, to stirring virility: " the island
[539] at sea, the fortress on land ", or " the step of the steed on
the plain ". Yet when all is said, it is a womanly image
which prevails: after the fortress comes the well in the
desert, and after the charger's step, the gracious calm of a
floating swan. It is all the more significant that the Invocation was addressed both 'to boys and girls' in one isle,
and 'to youths and maidens' in another. Not simply
was boyhood taught to honour girlhood: ideal womanhood
was invoked to raise manhood itself to fullness.

885 Upon marriage, the husband replaced the maiden's
[292] snood or *stiom* that bound her uncovered hair by the wifely
kerchief, *am breid*. Folded diagonally, its three-cornered
[585] shape came to symbolise the Trinity, in benediction on
[539] the bride's head.[1] A poem to a bride, " now beginning
her dual course ", commences, " A thousand hails to thee

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[538] likeness. The short second stanza given stands out alone: the poem,
having attained its climax by a rhythm sustaining the upward, sonorous
[192] movement, is hushed by its few simple words. In *From the Hebrides*, Mrs.
Kennedy-Fraser rearranged one or two of these lovely stanzas, as one of her
'lyrics with refrain'. *Cf.* A. Geddes, *The Songs of Craig and Ben*, vol. ii, 1955.

[1] The kertch is spoken of in many songs, in which a lover hopes to place it on his young love's head, or a husband praises its whiteness as worn by his wife. When first I knew the Lews, the kertch was still commonly worn
[198] under the more recent Lowland mutch, and either framed a young face, or an
old one, charmingly. The two have not quite vanished, though memories of what the kertch once symbolised are hard to find.

885 539 in thy kertch!" and counsels her to be hospitable yet wise, and courageous though calm; to be frank yet tactful, dignified though kind. The themes of this ode's melodious 885 538 593 verse recall the virtues of a wife enumerated mnemonically in the acrostic which concludes the Book of Proverbs. For in that, too, there is mention of "strength and dignity, wisdom and kindness", and the poor are not forgotten as the wife goes tirelessly about her work, sets her servants to their tasks and sells her merchandise at a profit. Yet the acrostic's emphasis on the wife's work and its gain reveal the writer as a shrewd citizen seeking to train a wife to ceaseless exertion and business dealing, with her husband's private profit and public honour as a most important end! The singer of 'The Kertch'—man or woman, one cannot tell—thought of conduct not for its profit first, but for its virtue, and dwelt upon motive, mind and heart.[1]

175 844 To tide over the supreme crisis of childbirth the mother was strengthened in confidence, courage and calm. The need was the greater before modern midwifery. In Sutherland as late as 1908, a good professional nurse tending a difficult case of childbirth, anxious and powerless without a doctor, found herself indebted to older wisdom. The patient's mother first filled a small basin with water into [788] which she put trinkets of gold and silver. "She then held the basin to her dying daughter's lips, and made her drink three mouthfuls of the water, each mouthful in the name of Father, and of Son, and of Spirit, 'the three Persons of the Trinity of kindness and power, *Tri Pears na Trianaid chaoimh chumhachdaich*'. Soon after, the child came . . .

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[113] [1] *Am Breid*, 'The Kertch'. *Carmina*, No. 215. A short paraphrase by Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser, set to a lovely air and refrain, will be found in *From the Hebrides*. First published (imperfectly) in *Nether Lochabor* by the Rev. Alexander Stewart (1883, p. 4) with delightful notes.

175 and all was well. . . . 'How the trinkets in the water
844 could affect the case', continued the nurse, 'I do not
788 know, but that some occult power was at work . . . I am
certain.' "[1] As to the gold, did not the Magi offer the
844 same 'magic' at the Nativity? Is a drink of water not the
simplest physic to cool a fevered system? Is not each
788 Name of the Trinity, breathed by a mother to her daughter
in labour in her turn, a Word of tender power and courage:
while the slow rhythm of the three Names may calm the
wild heart-beats which had brought on haemorrhage, and
lead to safe delivery?

771 Throughout life there prevailed the concept of God as 'encompassing' man, woman or child, old or young, in their weakness. This image is ancient, and is found in the Psalms (10, 12, 32, 142). So long as faith were alive the Lord's aid might be called upon for another in need of help, or for one's own protection. To clarify the concept, unseen, by help of a thing seen, a circle was drawn with the hand round oneself or another, in fear, danger or distress.[2] By such innocent aid the people strengthened confidence in sickness and resistance in temptation, and concentrated prayer for delivery from evil.

888 As age approached, its gifts were honoured. For in
age, memory, kneaded by labour, is leavened by leisure;
the experience won on land and sea, or in group-farm and
home, can be weighed. And gifts of feeling, sown in
childhood and growing through life, ripen as grandchildren
come in from their herding or play to listen and learn.
[538] When manuscripts or books were unobtainable, readings
rarely heard, and the people illiterate, teaching could only

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[1] *Carmina*, vol. iv, p. 283.

[2] *Carmina*, vol. ii, Notes; cf. Nos. 248-250, etc. Encircling or circuiting symbolically, was also known by a word of which only the literal meaning is now known to most: *cuartachadh*.

888 538 be given by ear and learning come by heart. Hence elders were the holders of an inheritance of treasures which must be sought from them or be lost for ever. But to be transmitted, the word must remain alive in the mind. Thus both the faculty of memory and the fruit it bore in an elder's mind brought respect, even veneration. Accuracy in retelling is still immensely valued, but so, too, were thoughtful commentary and poetic enrichment. Respect for elders, though general, was not given blindly, but personally and by choice.

888 771 562 As handed down, the Fifth Commandment runs: "Honour thy parents and hold them in loving regard" (*Striochd dha do pharantan 's thoir speis dhaibh*).[1] The community was pervaded by the Christian concept of a Holy Family, rather than by that of a patriarchate. This concept took root from the first missions to the Celtic community, with which it harmonised and which formed fertile ground for this Christian seed. Hence there was no general assertion of paternal, still less of patriarchal, authority at the expense of youth. Where equal honour is due to both parents, the mother finds equal duty and regard with the father. And although the father's home is close at hand while the mother's may be a little distance away, her parents are likely to be the younger and the more active and helpful to their grandchildren, and the influence of all four grandparents fairly balanced.

184 773 177 175 The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are named in a hymn of the Lews, sung when going up with the flocks and herds to the shielings; even this may be a Presbyterian adaptation (*Carmina*). But until the overwhelming weight

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[1] Rev. Allan Macdonald, p. 62, *Na Fointean*. The omission of the Mosaic paternal precedence may be a courtesy to motherhood implying equality in parenthood.

888 of the Old Testament made itself felt, as in Lewis-and-
771 Harris in the nineteenth century, this narrower patriarchal
562 example hardly affected thought.[1] Rooted in a wider form
(184) of family than a patriarchate, and reverencing a Holy Family
and all fellowship, Gaelic society honoured age and parent-
[773] hood for their inheritance, and childhood and youth for
[177] their promise.

[175] Such ideals of human relationship led to the veneration
of the Saints of the Gospels and of later history, and also
of those of legend, especially Bride. Dedications to Bride
773 or 'Bridget' are widespread from Wales to the Lews;
776 yet her memory has been all but lost in Britain, except in
the Isles. Carmichael wrote that "Bride and her services" are dear to the hearts of the people. She is called "Bride of the white feet . . . of calmness . . . of the kine; woman-comrade . . . and woman-helper . . ." "I am in the keeping of my Saint Mary: My companion beloved is Bride" (*Carmina*, Nos. 70-71; 263-264). As joy, steadfastness and attainment are generally linked to one notable stage in the life of each 'holy companion', the example, aid and fellowship of each saint in turn was especially sought, at a corresponding stage or crisis of one's own life.

776 The Gael's veneration for saintly men and women was
171 shared by Catholic peasantry throughout Christendom;
but its special quality seems to have been closeness of
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[1] Clanship has repeatedly been said to be 'patriarchal', as an ideal and
[614] a system. A different conclusion, that community is the root of clanship
(even in its political forms), may come as a surprise. The English or Lowland reader has had access only to the writings of strangers such as Burt. Not knowing Gaelic, these derived their information from Highland speakers of English who, deliberately or unconsciously, were biased by ranking as
[621] chief or gentry, and not unnaturally explained their position as patriarchal.
Thus strangers ignored the co-parental life of farm-groups and townships, economically humble but spiritually rich, as the root of a clan-community.

776 fellowship. "The Irish Church", a Roman is said to
171 have exclaimed to a Gaelic Catholic in scorn, "has won
no martyr's crown!" "Ireland was named the Isle of
174 Saints not by persecuting but by cherishing God's elect",
was the reply. The Celtic Church linked the lands across
St. Patrick's Channel; and what was true of Patrick's
missionary field seems to have been as true of Celtic
Britain, the land of his birth. Kilpatrick on the Roman
Wall of Clyde has been claimed as the birthplace of one
who was certainly a Cymric Celt by birth and baptism, a
Gaul by training, and an Irishman by mission.[1]

771 This closeness of fellowship ranged from personal to
divine relationships in waking or rest, with an intimacy of
[782] expression all its own. A prayer for rest begins, "I shall
lie down with God, and God lie down with me. . . ." A
[181] simple and universal gesture of love, in which parent,
child or lover slips an arm under the loved one's head, is
carried into prayer at rest, "the arm of the Father", or
779 of Jesus or Mary, "under my head". This image must
be the inspiration of one of the loveliest of Christian tombs,
764 preserved by clan loyalty, respect for the dead, distance
532 and later forgetfulness on the priory isle of Inchmahome,
where the Highlands meet the Lowlands at the Lake of
Menteith. As on a number of medieval monuments,
knight and lady are sculptured side by side. But here
the two lie each with "an arm under the other's head",
the free arm of the knight reaching over to clasp hands

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[1] While in Scotland the name Bride is now rare as a Christian name, that of Patrick is still found among Grants, Campbells, Macdonalds and others. It is even commoner than English speakers might suppose, owing to the practice—almost the necessity—of giving an English form to a Gaelic name when it is turned to English speech—as Daniel for Domhnuil (Donald), Aeneas for Aonghas (Angus) or Peter for Padhruig (Patrick). Many a Gael in the Lowlands felt obliged to relinquish his baptismal (and ancestral) names, with their link to Celtic Christian tradition.

779 with his spouse. The knight, the first Stewart Earl of
764 Menteith, had died four years after his wife, in 1294.
532 Medieval sculpture was then attaining its height, as this
monument, in spite of the ravages of time, bears witness.
175 The following year, 1295, saw the commencement of "the
three hundred years war" with its repeated destruction
644 of Scottish arts and traditions of peace. Under King
[829] Alexander III, "that Scotland led in luve and law", peace
within the kingdom of Scots allowed a union embracing
[648] Gaelic Christian traditions and Scoto-Norman arts. After
his death this became all but impossible. So far as scholars
181 can tell me, this almost unnoticed monument remains
764 unique in Christendom, indeed in the world.[1] The arts
of Scotland, hitherto in touch with European achievement,
were shattered by invasions, and Gaelic tradition was only
to be maintained by the very poor, whose debtors, for all
time, we have become.

763 At the approach of death God's mercy and peace were
sought. Latterly Roman Catholic prayers stressed the
782 wish for Confession to a priest, followed by Supreme
Unction for the attainment of 'Happy death', *Bas sona.*[2]
[174] In early times confession seems to have been made as
willingly to the 'Soul-friend', followed by Benediction.
When death had come, the mourners sang of sleep and
764 home. In Lewis today funerals are conducted in silence
to the graveside, where the last service is held; but

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[113] [1] *A unique medieval tomb at Inchmahome: a cultural link.* (Geddes, 1952.)

[2] It would be of deep interest to compare the attitudes to death found in 'Spiritual Songs' by Protestant Gaels like Buchanan or Grant, with songs on death which, though maybe of post-Reformation date, are of Roman Catholic origin (*e.g.* in Fr. Allan Macdonald's collection, poems on the Day of Judgment, and of Wrath; on age and on death; and on Purgatory:
[171] pp. 31, 85, 146; 34, 19, 21; 27). Some have much in common, both by virtue of the earlier traditions they shared and still more because of parallel trends of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Cf. *Carmina.*

764 Carmichael found versions of a mourners' hymn then still remembered as sung at funerals there. " Never could they who had heard it forget the solemnity of the occasion, where all was so natural and beautiful, and nature seemed to join in the feelings of humanity."[1] " I am going with thee to thy home! . . . Thy home of winter." ". . . To thy home of autumn, spring and summer . . . to thine eternal bed, thy perpetual sleep." " I am going home with thee, thou child of my love, To my dear Son of blessing, to the Father of grace."

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Tha mi dol dachaidh leat,
Go do thaigh! go do thaigh!
Tha mi dol dachaidh leat
Go do thaigh geamhraidh . . .

Tha mi dol dachaidh leat,
A leanaibh mo luaidh,
Go Macan nam beannachd,
Go Athair nam buadh.

"The Death Croon", handed down by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Macleod, leads on from almost the same opening, the Soul-friend singing to the fellow-watchers' refrain.[2] " Sleep, oh love, on thy Mother's bosom, Sleep while she sings soft lullings to thee, The sleep of the Son on Mary's breast. Sleep and put off from thee every woe. . . . Sleep of Jesus's youth . . . life . . . and glory . . . of His love . . . joy . . . and peace. . . . Sleep of the seven virtues . . . the seven moons . . . the seven slumbers upon thee. . . . Dream of Mary and God in her side, Dream of Columba in Isle of Saints, Dream of the Child

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[1] *Carmina*, No. 346. The word *Mac*, Son, is here given a tender diminutive form, *Macan*, 'dear Son', as if to complement the infinity of the Father's " achievement, victory or grace ".

[2] *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. i, pp. 98-105.

764 539 that never aged: Each one of these dreams, dear love, be thine. . . .

The dusk of the Death-sleep is, love, in thine eye,
But softly thou'lt sleep, softly sleep. . . .
In name of the Three in One,
Peace to thy pain,
The Christ is come . . .
  Softly sleep, softly sleep. . . .

114 The late Professor Sir J. Arthur Thomson, deeply moved on hearing it sung for the first time, exclaimed, "How profound the civilisation of those who composed and handed down this hymn of farewell!" The Soul-friend and Watchers seem to unfold before us the wide range of human love, and—as they recall the tender relationships of birth, childhood, parenthood and parting—to touch the universal.

CHAPTER VIII

CHANGE IN RELIGION AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

(A) COMMUNAL CHRISTIANITY, THE ROMAN CHURCH AND THE REFORMATION

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WHEN the Reformation broke upon Scotland and the Church of Rome was driven out, the new Church was slow to replace the priests and conventual clergy by its ministers. More than two hundred years later the minister of Harris wrote, with reason, that in contemplating " the decayed monuments of the piety of our Christian ancestors . . . the pious mind is affected with a mixture of awe and sorrow, while it can hardly admit that the overturning of the ancient church establishment ought to be considered as reformation here ". These words were honestly spoken. The minister continued: " In Harris, where, till within a few years back (from 1790), there has not been since the *aera* of our reformation from popery, so much as . . . one decent house for public worship; there were of old no less than twelve churches and chapels of which . . . the walls are yet standing, besides others . . . while tradition has preserved their names and dedications ".[1] These are those of monastic *cella* or *cill*, of parochial or collegiate *ecclesia* or *eagleis*,

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[1] *Old Statistical Account*, x, 376. No doubt many churches had lacked a priest for a considerable time before the Reformation; but taking a long view, the minister's conclusion was sound.

175 and of a township's tiny chapel, oratory or *teampull.*

798 [829] In Lewis, as in the Northern Isles, the early years of the Reformation period had been years of invasion by the King's Adventurers, of resistance, bloodshed and ruin. Hence when Mackenzie brought a Protestant clergyman to minister to the people they flocked to hear him. Naturally the new lord chose one of his important tenants from Kintail, the Rev. Farquhar Macrae. "For forty years prior to the visit (about 1611) no one in Lewis appears to have been baptized or married,"—or rather, no ceremonies had been performed by professional clergy, an important distinction. "'The population', we are told, 'had lapsed into heathenism', but 'Mr. Farquhar's' mission proved thoroughly successful. 'Large numbers of the people were baptized, some of them being fifty years of age, and many men and women were married who had already lived together for years.' The author also stated that the success of this mission went far to reconcile the inhabitants of Lewis to Lord Kintail's rule. According to a Kintail tradition, 'the number of people that came to be baptized by Mr. Farquhar was so great that, being unable to take them individually, he was obliged to sprinkle the water at random on the crowd with a heather besom'"[1] —much as it still is on certain festivals in the Roman Church.

[114] The tale of the Rev. Farquhar Macrae shows both the spiritual prestige of one who could read the Scriptures and must understand them, and the people's belief that a lord who brought a Gaelic clergyman must indeed be a Christian and was to be welcomed, or at least accepted. After the larger churches had been rifled by lairds, 'Pro-

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[113] [1] Brand Report, 1902, p. xii; from Alexander Macrae, the *History of the Clan Macrae*, Dingwall, 1899, p. 57.

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testant' and perhaps 'Catholic' too, or sacked by the King's Adventurers, there seems to have been little effort to build or rebuild the four 'paroche kirkis', one of the terms of the Royal grant or infeftment of the Lews to Kintail (Seaforth). But the evidence in the previous chapter makes one doubt that the maintenance of Celtic Christianity by the people in their thatched 'temples', in their homes and fields, or at sea, was " a lapse into heathenism ". The term had been better applied to the acts of certain chiefs, and of the King and his Adventurers.

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Although imbued with their traditional faith, the people were intensely aware of their isolation from the great world, and humble as to their own oral learning and religious culture. Moreover, since the arrival of Christianity they believed that they belonged to the Church Catholic. But by the sixteenth century their lords had misappropriated funds, clerical absenteeism was common, and they cannot have been unaware of faults in the Church of Rome. They were the more eager to welcome any cleric who read the revered Scriptures, whether he came as a Calvinist or Episcopalian from Edinburgh or by perilous journeys from Armagh, Spain or Rome itself.[1] Living far from the worst theological controversies and persecutions inflicted for a century after 1560, the Islesfolk revered a good cleric for his own sake, as they did Macrae and, later, the minister of Barvas (and Martin himself) in lonely North Rona in 1695.

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[1] Catholic missions to the Isles in the penal times are described in Compton Mackenzie's *The Book of Barra*, 1936. Martin (1695) refers to some Harris fishermen recently reconverted by priests, and to the mockery of their 'Protestant' neighbours because in spite of Roman prayers, their fishing had been less successful! Some of the MacKenzie tacksmen and no doubt their tenantry remained Roman Catholics until after the 'Forty-five, notably MacKenzie of Kildun near Stornoway, who gave shelter to Prince Charles in 1746. (W. C. Mackenzie, 1919, pp. 126-130.)

175 The advent of the Reformers to the Island may at first
798 have seemed less revolutionary to the people than has
generally been suggested by historians of either the new
181 Church or the old. Ministering to one another, the people
779 had not, like the city-dwellers of their time, enjoyed—or
suffered—a multiplicity of offices, administered by priests whose ways of living might be a scandal. The Mass heard in Latin was incomprehensible to those of Celtic (or Teutonic) speech without the aid of translation into the vernacular—an aid now universal among literate Roman Catholics. Most of these offices, such as auricular confession to a priest to obtain absolution, with masses for the dead, indulgences and the like, were performed for payments prohibitive to the poor. The Islesfolk, for the most part, lived far both from the orthodox practices of the Latin Church and from the more flagrant abuses against which a minority of the old Church had protested in vain. Hence the transition to early Protestant liturgy would not be too painful. In prolonged isolation, the Gaelic people, perforce, had lived the life of the Lollard and Protestant doctrine of " the Priesthood of all believers ".

175 After the Reformation the people were bewildered by
181 the mutual condemnation of Presbyterian, Episcopalian
and Jesuit, and torn to the quick when all three parties in
798 turn denounced so much that they themselves held dear.
The more the rival clergy confused and wounded their minds, the harder it was for younger generations to discern ancient Gaelic wisdom and discard superstition; and the easier to fall into credulous and secretive repetition of rhymes and strings of holy names. The scorn of the wealthy for simple rites and of the book-learned for the symbols of old speech would add to confusion rather than aid discrimination. As pious and understanding crofters

175 complained in Carmichael's own time, mockery is hard to
181 withstand. One can only guess, as yet, what were the real
798 effects of the decadence of Rome and the impact of the
Reformation upon the landward communities of the Lowlands and Northern Isles. But the records of the Western Isles leave no doubt as to the onset of this spiritual tragedy among the Gael, of which Carmichael and others saw the later acts and of which one still finds the epilogue.

175 The grim desperation of the religious and civil wars,
798 and their persecutions—crucifixions made by every side
in the name of the Cross—caused faith to be disastrously shaken. Superstition rushed into the widening cracks in older belief, aided by important sects of clergy. In the Highlands, 'witch' torture was never carried to the lengths it reached in the cities, though the last 'witch'-burning in Scotland may have occurred in east Sutherland (P. Hume Brown, *History*, ii, 1912, p. 451). But the frenzy of witch-hunting by ministers in the Lowlands, during the widespread evictions and social anarchy of the post-Reformation period, suggests that the Adventurers' invasion of the Lews, followed by the arrival of new masters and Presbyterian ministers after 1600, must have aroused morbid, anti-social fears. Lewis certainly suffered from fear of the evil eye as late as the nineteenth, and even this, century.

We have to face the effects on the people of religious strife. To ardent Reformers the Blessed Sacrament of the Roman Church was a 'Jack-in-the-box'; and at the climax of the Mass, the elevation of the Host—the moment of 'transubstantiation' with its literal interpretation of the words, "This is my flesh" (*Hoc est corpus meum*)—was so much 'hocus-pocus'.[1] Conversely, to Roman Catholics

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[113] [1] J. H. Matthews, *The Folklore of the Mass*, p. 96, 1903 (Catholic Truth Society).

175 much of Protestantism was a denial of Christianity.
798 Holders of all these forms of Trinitarian belief have united in condemning Unitarianism as heresy, its earlier Arian
771 form having been stamped out in blood. The 'heterodox' are held by the orthodox of many Churches to be awaiting eternal torture. To a thoughtful humanist like Sir James Frazer, on the other hand, the belief that one alone by suffering can atone for the sins of others is of the deepest significance, as being an ancient, widespread and 'pathetic
[795] fallacy'. Happily, one finds the greatest tolerance and sympathy where Protestant and Catholic are mixed in the
[181] Isles. Elsewhere, too, sympathy and reverent enquiry are taking the place of dogmatic assertion.[1] It is in this spirit that we can best understand Gaelic beliefs at their highest, and so distinguish their lowered use—or misuse for selfish ends—from the highest use of sacrament and prayer by the pure of mind and heart.

(B) RELIGION, MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION IN DAILY LIFE

789 Evil ends might be sought by means of the ancient runes: the power of their poetry and associations could tempt to perverted use. Carmichael tells how in Uist a malefactor, in terror of the law, went to a needy woman, and by appealing to her pity—and in exchange for a small sum—learned from her an "Invocation for Justice". Strengthened by its rhythm and imagery, and by his own associated belief in its magical power as a charm, he stood up boldly in Court, firmly asserted his innocence and got

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[113] [1] Cf. the friendly theological arguments between a Bernera Presbyterian and a Roman Catholic from Barra (*Bodach Bharraidh*—vii, viii), sketched in Gaelic by I. N. Macleoid, *Litrichean Alasdair Mhoir*, Stornoway, 1932.

789 away scot-free! Both persons secretly concerned felt that they had endangered their souls by successfully defeating justice through their misuse of the invocation. Can one
[783] doubt that they were partly right in both beliefs? The malefactor's confidence had lent success to perjury, and perjury by help of prayer was deadly sin.

114 Now, the perverted use of prayer, as in this case, was clearly understood to be evil-doing; but what of magic and superstitious practices? Much has been written of 'Highland folk-lore and superstitions'.[1] The religion of the past should be distinguished from these. In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer drew a useful distinction between religion and magic. Religion, he wrote, relies upon the propitiation of higher powers—or even, in more primitive forms than Christianity, the propitiation of the forces of nature—while magic is an attempt at direct control of
121 natural forces. Superstition may be defined here as a body of beliefs and practices in which hopes and fears attach themselves to things seen or done, by a multitude of false analogies and by irrational links of effects to supposed causes. Such superstitions are marginal to the main body of belief, worship and conduct which forms religion.

At the same time, no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between folk-lore and religion, where religion is handed on as living word and ritual almost without the aid of
121 writing. This is particularly true where the religion of
771 which we think, that of the Gael, is founded upon self-supporting peasant life, in line with that of the humble, working founder of Christianity—historically native to an outlying district of his own country—and not with the

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[113] [1] D. J. Macleod, D.Litt.: (*a*) *Highland Folklore* (32 pp.), Inverness; (*b*) Introduction to Martin's *Western Isles* (edn. Stirling, 1934). N. Morrison, Hon. D.Sc., *Superstitions of Lewis*, Stornoway, *c.* 1930.

121 [771] theology and scholarship of a capital city, even of a city so small as Jerusalem! It is sometimes forgotten that the Old Testament, upon which so much of theology is built, contains folk-lore and magic. Not until this is fully understood in the sense in which early Oriental 'folk' believed it, can it be interpreted, whether as imaginative symbolism or common sense.[1] Much in the orthodox belief of medieval or post-Reformation times was mistaken; yet it formed part of the religion, not the 'superstition' of the stage and period. Theology and philosophy are in constant transformation. Sheltered scholars, priests and rulers of cities may be ill-fitted to interpret the inspiration of a religion which grew from life in field, pasture and at sea, whether in its native land of Galilee and the East or among the Gael. One must live with a people and be one of them, at least for a time, to interpret their inner life. Lastly, no generalisation is true for all members of a community: individuals differ. The same prayer, the same rite, may be used in so different a way by each of two neighbours that its use by one is religious but by the other superstitious.

114 776 We have seen that the essence of the lore from which we have quoted is not magical, but religious, in use as in inspiration. Strangers who had lost the sense of the beauty in the skies mistook a Gael's adoration of God at sunrise for prayer to the sun; when a man unbonneted or a woman knelt in the open, face turned to the rising moon lightening the dark, they confused prayer with worship of the moon itself. Now, in paganism, a belief in nature-spirits is strong: but propitiation is made not to objects such as the sun or moon, but to spirits believed to influence or

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[113] [1] W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (3rd ed., ed. S. A. Cooke, 1927). J. G. Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (3 vols.), 1919.

114 776 dwell in them—to a sun or moon spirit. If the people once believed in a 'moon-spirit', nothing is left to show it. Either the moon is addressed as if she could hear her praise, or—more commonly—"The King of the Elements" or "of life" is thanked for sending her light. The Archangel Michael is associated with the sun's rays; but symbolically in relation to heart and mind, rather than as literal belief. The response to sunrise and sunset was real; and it is not lost among the people, as a watcher may see.[1]

178 771 788 It remains true that pre-Christian rites were re-enacted, sometimes in fear and desperation when things had gone wrong, and sometimes in mere play. A Lewisman in Carmichael's hearing spoke of "going between the two great fires of Beul" (or Baal), his phrase expressing no more than a faded memory. But in Reay, in hard times bordering on famine, a fishing skipper was seen by his small son, supposed to be asleep, to assemble his crew and, after putting out the fire on the hearth, kindle the *neid fire* by rubbing two pieces of wood vigorously together. Each man then carried a kindling back to his own home.[2]
121 Was this a religious ritual of human energy, heat and light, symbolic of forces held to be under Divine control but to be used as they used wind and tide by strenuous effort at the oars? Or was it magic, pure and simple? When men are shaken by failures and the fear of famine, prayer in word and ritual may restore hope for better things—for safety in storm and for fish in abundance as in a miraculous draught—and confidence in their powers for their work. But the same can be true of magic. And neither prayer nor

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(113) [1] For contemporary record, descriptions of sunsets have appeared in the *Stornoway Gazette* from the pen of a crofter in retirement, N. Morrison.

[2] *Carmina*, vol. ii, Notes, *Neid Fire*.

121 magic is always efficacious—however desperate the need,
however pure the motives of those who ask. These men
771 were said to be the most successful fishers in the place;
788 they were also Elders of the Kirk, who saw no wrong in
what they did. They did not inform the minister; but
the good man was not a fisherman and did not understand
either the mysterious ways of fish or the incitement of a
crew!

While this *neid fire* was kindled in all earnestness, a
miming song-dance I have seen in Eriskay is pure fun:
'the Carline or Witch-wife of the Mill-dust' (*Cailleach an
Dudain*), who falls down dead and is brought to life again!
[174] Once, perhaps, a half-remembered symbolic 'play' of the
seasonal fall and resurrection of seed, it is certainly in
[178] form and spirit a thing of happy laughter now! Tales were
retold by Martin and a seventeenth-century English skipper,
of offerings made to a sea-god, Shony, at Eoropie, Ness,
for the sake of seaweed, followed by feasting and drinking
[174] in the chapel there.[1] The story may be garbled or, if true,
may record a pre-Christian survival turned to merriment
and of no more significance to the people of the time than
[241] 'the Carline of the Mill-dust'. The prayers for the seaweed
necessary for agriculture and daily bread are Christian
in spirit.

771 When the people were at the mercy of periodic famines,
731 diseases and sudden death, there were ample grounds for
fears. Hence a word must be said of a belief widespread
171 and ancient in the Old World, 'the evil eye' (*droch shuil*).
In the absence of clinical diagnosis, a malady, or a misfortune
754 to oneself or a valued possession, might cast
suspicion on someone present when it occurred; and

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[1] W. C. Mackenzie, 1919, pp. 143-208. Contrast *Carmina*, vol. iv, pp. 33-35.

171 though the suspected person was not thereby accused of
754 ill will, he would have to make some effort to put it right.
'Cure' might be sought either by counter-malediction
on the supposed ill-wisher, known or unknown, or else
by prayer that the evil should be spread so widely as to be
harmless, as "on all the wild birds of Heaven . . . that
it would do them no harm"—a charming touch! (*Carmina*,
782 vol. iii). Prayer was the normal and the best protection,
free of any malediction, and was included in general intercession
for loved ones. But fears remain—not only in
'distant' isles—both in peace and in the extreme stress
of war.

114 A psychotherapist of 1917–18, A. J. Brock, wrote that
155 the "War was not in essence a new thing, the ordinary life
of every day being itself a sort of battle".[1] Brock brought
the hard-learned psychotherapy of war to bear upon a fresh understanding of the countryman struggling against an environment with which he has got out of tune. Failing in spite of strained effort to get the food and warmth he needs for himself and his 'wife and weans', the peasant may lose happiness in home and village, and faith in the future. "How did primitive people express all this?" asked Brock, noting that the risks and casualties of bad times in the past brought fears and floating pictures comparable to those of 'shell-shocked' patients.

171 In all lands the unity of family life and labour is
776 symbolised in homelier folk-lore by the protective spirit
of each homestead. As long as the work is carried on heartily and thriftily the Brownie is pleased. But the people may become negligent, or begin to labour from mercenary motives. The true spirit of the work is then upset and (in all folk-lore) the Brownies begin to give

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[113] [1] A. J. Brock, *Health and Conduct*, 1923, pp. 155-170.

171 trouble. "Everything seems to go wrong"; and the
776 peasant falls asleep at night in fear of ills to come. First
in his dreams and next in his day-dreams, these take shape
171 as an offended, hostile 'spirit'. The spirit of the place
776 —of the place-work—has become angry. So also, if the
peasant's wife pursues her household work 'in the right
787 spirit', then in her dreams and reveries she is helped by
kindly presences; but if not, things go wrong, objects
mislaid have been taken by 'someone' and a tormenting
house-imp plays havoc with her home. These figures of
day-dreams were involuntary and 'shady', without the
clarity either of earthly things or of heavenly visions.
Yet they personified moods of real significance.

776 The Uruisg of the Gael helped about the farm and
household—like the Tonte of Sweden and the Lubberfiend
of Merrie England in Milton's *L'Allegro*. Each
task may have its own symbol. Of one of these, the cattle-tending
Glaistic of the Highlands and Isles, Brock quotes
from Mrs. E. Carmichael Watson: "Harmless and
lovable as a rule,—especially in the older stories—in a few
of the later stories she is represented as irritable. . . .
776 The more recent stories about the Glaistic are rather
unpleasant. She no longer plays with the children or
178 sings rhymes—she has degenerated into a kind of female
ruffian. Probably it would be nearer the truth to say that
the change has been in the Highlands rather than in the
Glaistic." Brock comments, "This last remark is significant.
[155] The increasing irritability of tutelary nature-deities
means that the spirit of the old economic life—the equilibrium
between Highlanders and Highlands—is being
upset"; and so too is that between Highlander and Highlander!
In Lewis *Ni Chlach Urlar* (She (or It) of the
Hearth Stone), who personified domestic strife, makes
trouble; and neighbours come to suffer too!

000 trouble; and neighbours come to suffer too!

181 Turning to natural things, how far could the people observe and think rationally, free from the intervention of imaginary beliefs? The Gael possess common sense, keen observation, ready wits and accurate memory. They show powers of tracing effects to their cause; and on the whole, their agricultural practices were based on good sense, and their knowledge of nature was wide. Before taking a social decision, they reasoned together to good purpose.

In the ordering of family life, their ideals were founded on common sense and human feeling, little interfered with by superstitions. Irrational prohibitions too often restrict the issues of life where it is already severely limited by [864] environment. A word should therefore be said of the bearing of beliefs upon the physical aspects of mating and 181 parenthood, and of Gaelic teaching upon these. To begin 864 with an early experience among all peasantry, during 233 calving and lambing today shepherds, cattlemen and dairy-maids show delighted tenderness—there is no other word for it—in the care of mother and new-born offspring, though at other times they may be quite rough-and-ready at their work. What is true of hired farm-hands is still truer of a crofter's family tending their own precious stock. When out herding, boys and girls, before and after puberty, have to be exact in reporting when a bull has served a cow, so as to tell whether or no a calf is to be looked for next spring.

181 864 At the same time, human facts were not left to be learned only by observation of animals, but were simply and frankly taught. In a parent's verses to a maiden, for instance, marriage is spoken of tenderly but frankly, in words which can hardly be translated literally without over-emphasis to most English ears. There is a place for

181 gentle frankness, as there is for reticence.[1] But since
864 Augustine, orthodox religion, Catholic and Protestant, has
[771] overstressed and misunderstood the folk-lore of 'the Fall'
—originally, it seems, a legend of fertility and fulfilment!
[869] In part as a result of the teaching of the doctrine of the
'Fall', there has arisen an attitude to parenthood which
[773] falls short of rational understanding and reverence for
human life.[2] If fact be the best guard against superstitious
fancy, and if sensibility and tact can soften the first shock
of adolescence, then the Gael knew wisdom.

121 Returning to the main theme, it is clear that primitive
religion and folk-lore alike show misunderstandings of
cause and effect, and of the action of 'mind' on 'body'
and 'matter'. What are facts to faith may be symbols to
science; yet if these symbols prefigure truth, they may
121 outlast the present stage of scientific recognition. Gaelic
771 belief and practice show a recognition of communal as
well as individual spirituality; of the depth of conscious-
181 ness below its upper surface, and its upwelling power;
and of the visible world without, in all its beauty, as a gate

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[533] [1] Needless to say, Gaelic verse has its moments of coarse freedom like that of any tongue. Of the lively lilts (*puirt-a-beul*) sung when there is no piper or fiddler to play for dancing, most of the words are delightful, but a few are not. A rather 'drinky' dissolute fellow—a small contractor on one of the Isles whose apprenticeship in the cities had not improved his character—once quoted a coarse jingle to me, only to see little amusement at his song and some contempt for its singer. He excused himself by saying, "It's rough . . . it's rough—but it's not dirty"! His excuse sums up the cruder expressions of animal spirits found in Gaelic jingles. One may adapt it as "Sometimes coarse, but rarely or never vicious".

[2] A. Geddes, "The Origin of Sin in Genesis and a Missing Legend", *Hibbert J.* vol. 44, Nos. 1 and 3, 1945-46. Cf. *The Legends of Creation: an Anthropo-Geographical Interpretation of Genesis*, i-iii (with map); *Man*, vol. 45 (104), 1945.

The Churches have given attention to the second chapter of Genesis, at the expense of the first. Gaelic spiritual tradition seems to have been singularly unwarped by such confused mythology, and to have held firmly to the first chapter, in its noble simplicity.

121 771 181 to the world within. Above all, harmony of relations, at every stage of life, in man and woman, was felt to prefigure relations with the Divine. The religious poetry of which the Gael were the creators and heirs, promoted courage and calm. True, its very power could lead to superstitious respect for mere forms of words, debased as 'magical' charms. Such misuse was 'superstitious', being false in itself and falling short of the clearest thought, the highest aspiration, of the time and the community. Worse still, use with evil intent could concentrate ill-will and evoke mutual fears. Yet at its best, thought was clearer, less confused, than is commonly imagined. To the aspiration and attainment of the Gael—in congregation or solitude, in meditation or labour, in love and faith or in works—the fragments of their oral heritage bear witness.

(c) LITERACY AND EVANGELISM: 'THE MEN' AND THE DISRUPTION

175 178 871 From before 1680 "a school for the gentlemen's sons and daughters" was open in Stornoway. Latin and English were taught, and a century later even Greek had been added, as recorded by W. J. Gibson, for many years Rector of Stornoway's high school, the Nicolson Institute, in his *Education in Scotland*, 1912 (chap. v). Particularly towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Gaelic School Society and other bodies, like the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, sent out schoolmasters to teach the reading of the Scriptures. Industrial schools were set up at the same time by Lady Seaforth, to teach spinning [671] by the wheel, replacing the slow distaff. It was not till nearly a century later that teaching of English was widely taken advantage of — partly by the compulsion of the

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178 Education Act of 1872, for the people "did not want to
871 give their children wings to leave them".[1]

The reading of Gaelic progressed fairly rapidly after
[671] 1800, in order that the Bible might be read. By 1833 something like one in three or four of the population, or more than half of the younger people, could read Gaelic. The Hon. Mrs. Stewart-Mackenzie of Seaforth, it seems, had a 'warm sympathy' both with teaching to read the
175 Scriptures and with evangelical preaching. The coming
114 to Lewis in 1824 of the first evangelical minister, the Rev. Alexander MacLeod, an Assynt man, is described in his
793 memoir in a striking volume, *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*, edited by J. Greig (1877).

175 "At the distance of more than half a century it is not
771 easy to form a conception of the religious and moral condition of Lewis previous to the year 1824. The present
793 writer has heard a still living minister of the Free Church, who is a native of Uig, declare publicly that only two or three copies of the Bible could be found within the wide extent of the parish, and that he himself travelled a journey in search of a copy of the blessed book, and all in vain. . . . The densest intellectual and spiritual darkness held universal sway. Notwithstanding the pleasing features that characterise Highlanders, even in their most primitive condition, this state of things could not fail to be attended with baleful fruits. Despite their constitutional warmth of heart and loyalty of nature, unbending fidelity to what they esteemed to be honour, and their unbounded kindness and hospitality, many gross vices were found commingling in the characters and lives of the Lewis people. For, however strange it may appear, at the first prayer-meeting

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[1] Quotations to this effect, dating from the *Old Statistical Account* until 1883, are given in the Brand Report of 1902.

175 which Mr. Macleod attempted to hold at Uig, one of the
791 former elders actually offered a request that a wreck should
793 be cast ashore in the neighbourhood;[1] while another elder, referring to the death of our Lord as a misfortune, used strong expressions of deprecation of its having at all occurred.[2] . . . The reason is easily furnished; the Lewis ministry was not evangelical. Moderatism held the land in sole possession. . . . Nor did it act merely in a negative indifferentist manner. Moderatism contained in itself elements of positive distaste to Gospel truth, and enmity towards gracious influences and experience. As a matter of course, it was perfectly compatible with this system to grant toleration to superstitions and superstitious observances, which had been handed down through the Dark Ages of Popery from the still darker ages of Druidical idolatry. Acts of adoration, having for their object the heavenly bodies, were common. It is scarcely necessary to state that family worship was unknown among the people, and even at the manse. For although the public ordinances were dispensed as a matter of form, they exerted no practical influence upon the conduct. They rather tended to lull more profoundly asleep by imparting and maintaining a feeling of security to the poor dark benighted souls who participated in them."

People did come to church "in tolerable numbers" from the very outset of Mr. Macleod's ministry, but "Here for the first time was a preacher who showed by his whole

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[829] [1] Shipwreck was still thought of as an 'act of God', and a dire 'misfortune'. Not only is there no hint of deliberate wrecking ever taking place, as on some other British coasts, but abundant record of aid to the shipwrecked and respect for their property in the absence of the skipper and crew. (Martin, 1695; and later.)

[784] [2] According to Evangelical theory the punishment of guilty and innocent alike was part of the Divine plan. How different this, from the faith of the Islanders till then!

175 manner that he had in hand business of eternal moment
771 to his hearers. That business was to warn them of the
793 wrath to come, which impended over unpardoned Christless
sinners, and to proclaim the way of escape by the open
[178] door of a crucified and risen Saviour. Not more than
two months had elapsed since Mr. Macleod's admission when the 'stupid attention' and vacant stare passed into the wistful anxious listening, the suffused eye, the tender subdued manner, and in some cases the heart-wringing enquiry, 'What must I do to be saved?'

[783] "For something like two years this minister 'refused to dispense the Lord's Supper'. . . . A very early effect of his work was the extinction of various worldly and pernicious customs and amusements to which the people had been previously addicted, and the substitution of meetings for prayer, diets of catechising, day and evening schools, family worship, and other spiritual exercises in their room. Many at the outset felt greatly aggrieved at the new order of things. Meanwhile the Lord stood by his servant, and the word mightily prevailed against all opposition. Incredible efforts were made by earnest souls in all parts of the island to be present at the preaching of the Word, even on ordinary Sabbaths." By 1828 "the whole island seemed to be moved by one powerful spiritual impulse" and 9000 people flocked from all parts to the Uig communion. "When the memorable 18th of May 1843 dawned"—that of the Disruption—"no part of the country was readier to rally round the banner then displayed, because of the truth, than the island of Lewis almost to a man." It was "an unspeakable relief to the ministers' spirits to escape by one decided step at once from the bondage of State control and the chilling atmosphere of Moderatism. . . . Even where evangelical preach-

175 ing was lacking, and the minister of the parish remained
771 in the Establishment, the popular movement inclined
793 unanimously towards the cause of the suffering and protesting Church of Scotland, with the exception of a small handful of people in Stornoway."

794 The part of elder folk in religious life continued to be
796 important, but in new ways. Masculine influence now dominated the family and the congregation. The 'Men' in
178 the Highlands were Elders of the Church who often spoke as lay preachers and who rose to speak on 'Question Day'—that is on the Friday of the Communion Services, which extended, and still do, from Thursday, the Fast Day, to Monday, the Thanksgiving Day. The presiding minister, after opening devotions, invited any Elder of the Parish to rise and propose the Question; the Elder having read a text from Scripture, would say he wished to hear the 'marks' of the true Believer, drawn from the text. After the minister had himself "opened out the text", he would name visiting Elders, calling upon them in turn to speak. One by one, each would rise and give his picture of the real Christian in terms of the qualities suggested by the text. "And so the hour sped under the pleasing and helpful variety of a dozen speakers or more. The 'Men' spoke out of rich experience. . . . 'Question Day' was a self-searching season, when every hearer examined his heart by the 'marks' adduced . . . and as this went on there was a sweet glow on the face of the Congregation as the presiding Minister summed up and closed the holy Convocation." [1]

175 The 'Men' had long been a recognised Order in the
178 Highlands, and their foundation is traced to Thomas Hog,
794 the famous minister of Killearn, "born in Tain in the

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[1] Rev. N. C. Macfarlane, *The 'Men' in the Lews* (1924).

175 year in which John Bunyan was born ". Archbishop Sharp
178 " banished him to the dungeons of the Bass Rock for twenty-eight years, and it was during his imprisonment
794 that the meetings of communicants were kept going by a parishioner,—a reformed tinker and a gifted and consecrated lieutenant ". This tradition of the 'Men' renewed itself and spread with each wave of 'Revival'. It sprang up in the Islands more than a century ago, as it had on the north-western mainland during the later eighteenth century, and in 'Easter' Ross two hundred years before.

[798] The spiritual crises of the Reformation and of the Cromwellian and Covenanting age are still profoundly influential; yet they seem hard for those from the Lowlands and England to understand because they occurred so long ago. But in Lewis, Macfarlane writes of the 'Men' whom he knew and admired, in order to keep their memory green. Once more, life in the Isles throws fresh light on the past, revealing its significance.

(D) EVANGELISM AND ERASTIANISM, WRATH AND WOE

175 The Disruption[1] gave a powerful urge to the move-
668 ment for freedom, in many ways. Throughout Scotland the people were made to feel that both landlordism and the
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[1] The issues of Disruption, for the sake of freedom from the choice of a minister by the landlord's patronage and from State control, were reviewed by the Rev. Prof. G. D. Henderson, in *Heritage of the Disruption*, 1943 (published at the centenary, and nearly half a generation after the Union of 1929). While the Free Church still maintains a strong hold in the Island—and among a small minority elsewhere who feel that even the terms of the Union could not secure full moral freedom—it is claimed by the Church of Scotland that its constitution now goes far to solve " the age-long antinomy of establishment and freedom ", a view widely held abroad, both in Germany and in the smaller lands of North-west Europe occupied by the invader, at the time of the centenary.

175 State were in the wrong: the people were with God and,
668 most of all when they suffered, God was with them! The
sense of liberation brought to the Highlanders and Islesmen encouraged them to press their claim to the land they worked, strengthening the agrarian movement of 1880–86. The moral victory of 1843 contributed to legal victory in 1886.

175 The influence of Evangelism continued for some time
178 at fever heat. "Even down to the present time (1877)
there are tokens of the gracious working of the Spirit on
771 men's minds, although it is a day of small things com-
795 pared with the past and, in the case of some, a day of
stumbling and instability. How humbling to behold the first reaction in favour of worldly and Erastian[1] principles, manifesting itself on the spot where the gospel banner was first unfurled in Lewis! But there is a God that judgeth in the earth, and his time to vindicate his cause shall come. 'Offences must come, but woe unto that man by whom they shall come!'"[2]

181 What comment can be made on this? One shudders at first, to hear of 'gross vices' among the people, only to find that by these 'vices' was meant fidelity to the religious past. It may seem strange that Highlanders such as these writers on the 'Disruption Worthies', who were almost as proud of Columba as of the Covenanters, were blinded to the enduring values in Columban tradition. They were certainly unable to foresee the effects of their preaching.

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[1] 'Erastianism' is the doctrine of the supremacy of the State in ecclesiastical causes, a term which came into use in Britain in the seventeenth century. Actually the problem is one which Erastus, 1524–83, nowhere entered upon; none the less, the name is established, and it denotes a major issue of principles.

[2] J. Greig (ed.), *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands* (1877).

775 The Evangelicals, so insistent in condemning the beliefs
771 and worship of ancient Christianity as ' vice ' and ' superstition ',
comparatively rarely condemned words and rites
designed to bring punishment upon a person believed to
have wronged one—that is upon a person one hated! Of
such was the practice, widespread in the Old World, of
moulding a clay figure representing the person to be harmed,
and either sticking pins into it, exposing it to fire, or leaving
it in a stream, with a prayer that as the figure wasted away
so would the object of hatred. An educated Lewisman
I knew, Dr. Norman Morrison, stated that an aunt of
his own performed this rite. No doubt she persuaded
herself that if the desired injury took place, natural or
Divine law was at work and she herself was therefore
[178] innocent or actually just. What is striking is that in the
twentieth century, long after the healing beauty and
Christian calm of runes and rites had been banished and the
healthy laughter of gay custom silenced, this pre-Christian
rite of ill-will had lived on. One hardly knows whom to
pity the more: the hated, for the fear they would feel if
they knew the rite was at work, or the hater. The extreme
Evangelicals made so little appeal to reason based on fact,
that the irrational element in superstition was not firmly
[829] replaced by a sane, scientific outlook. Indeed ' science '
was condemned as ' unbelief '. The constant evocation of
wrath, anger and " the punishment of just and unjust "
played havoc with the emotions.

Those brought up on the precepts of Presbyterianism
—especially in its milder forms—and familiar from infancy
with a selection of Old Testament readings, can hardly
appreciate the shock to a sensitive heart of first hearing
[776] the whole of the Old Testament read Book by Book. The
shock is due not only to the acts of vengeance or massacre,

795 but still more to their repeated justification in the name
771 of the Lord 'God'. 'God' the universal (*Elohim*) came
[776] to be identified with the tribal god Jahveh or Yahweh,
altered, late in Jewish history, to "the LORD God", the
000 term still used in Bibles. The war cry of the Jewish tribes,
as they swept in from the desert or tightened their hold
upon citizens and cultivators, was that of many wild
wanderers, before and since, who have cried upon their
God of Battles, upon Jahveh, or Allah. Magnificent in its
affirmations of righteousness, the Old Testament can be
terrible in its denials of pity.

795 The Bible (literally *Biblia*, the Books) reflects the search
771 of a people through centuries towards the idea of God;
but the tragedy of the Bible, or rather of its historic misuse,
538 came with the acceptance of all 'Scripture' as equal in
inspiration and truth. The early and the late were accepted
together, the mixed or false with the true. The custom of
seeking Divine guidance by simply opening a page of 'the
blessed Book'—that is, any text on any page of any one
of its books—was an example of such acceptance; and it
[175] was only possible for the literate. In Lewis, Macfarlane
records the custom, practised by 'The Men', late in the
nineteenth century.

175 Reading came late to the Islanders, but its effects were
as direct as among the Puritans or Covenanters at an earlier
178 period. The people, whose hearts had long since been
771 wrung with pity at the Crucifixion and who were steeped
[538] in reverence for the Gospels, became 'changed' indeed.
Once their minds had been crushed by the Old Testa-
[212] ment's massive weight, the 'change' was reinforced by the
vision of a world to come, limned by fevered imagination
[795] in the New Testament's finale, the Apocalypse. The
'change' was brought by Evangelicals who had themselves

175 undergone the same crushing experience, at a time when
178 communal life was being overthrown by the Industrial
771 Revolution. "Terrible old men!" exclaimed a wise Lewis
schoolmaster, of these 'Disruption Worthies'. It was not
795 that they were inhuman—that is clear from the warmth
felt for them by so many of the people, who would never
have taken kindly to the unkind.

175 Nor were the first Evangelicals invariably severe. Of
178 the Rev. Mr. Macrae, long in Lewis, it is told that, when
young he had rebuked an older fellow-minister for levity
771 at a ministers' supper on Communion Monday. Leaping
795 up, the minister seized Macrae by the shoulders and danced
behind him, till Macrae was forced to join in the laugh!
181 Macrae never forgot the sane and kindly words spoken
to him after: and he saw he had been wrong to identify
cheerfulness with irreligion. Yet much joy was extinguished
or found illicit vent. To such ruthless zeal, there
came inevitably reaction, noted even by 1877, and still
more notable during the war of 1914–18 and after. Conflict
or compromise was inevitable where Churchmen emphasised
terror and inveighed against the calm heritage of
their forebears and the happiness for which human nature
178 asks. The days of emotional 'Revival' are by no means
771 over and from them the pendulum may swing from excess
back to relieved but wearied unconcern. Moreover, with
the emigration of so many of the men, the balance of family
life was upset. Some thoughtful men and women feel that
the 'Revival' which swept their Island (with the rest of the
Presbyterian Hebrides) before 1939 and during the war
was partly due to the excessive influence of spinsters, to
whom strict Presbyterianism offered little outlet for
motherly emotion or sisterly service.

(B) SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN CHANGE

178 181 183 In spite of ' the wrath to come ', life had to go on, work be done, and natural affection find an outlet in youth. How could the women waulk the cloth without a chorus to keep their beating hands in time? Songs had to be allowed by the sternest for this work in common. In a land where marriage was not an affair of dowries, but chiefly of love choice among the young folk, the old courting customs could not wholly be denied. Curiously enough, drinking was not severely looked upon by Scots rural Evangelists; in one story in the Old Testament, it is not the drunkard, but his mocker whom the Lord punished! In a city, a drunk man is a prey to thieves and harpies; but in a township none will do him harm. But today there are Evangelical ministers who think that drink should be frowned on at weddings and *ceilidhs*, while song and dance might be tolerated.

175 Not all the people gave in willingly to the severity of
the new creed. In Uig there is a cave, the ' Piper's Cave ',
771 to which a crofter was wont to resort on dark nights, his
795 pipes in his oxter, when the wind blew *from* the manse and
183 out to sea! Ultimately the least willing were forced to
give in, first, by the appalling threat of the refusal of communion, and secondly, by denunciation from the pulpit
(178) and the ostracism of the Elders. Much was destroyed
that can never be recovered now, and many a fine heart
saddened or broken. It was the most intimate expression
of their lives, their religious lore, which suffered most.[1]

178 181 Yet something remains, preserved by the good sense,

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[1] Carmichael gives an infinitely pathetic account of a conversation in a home in Ness about 1880-85. *Carmina*, pp. xxvii-xxxii.

178 intuitive and traditional, of the people, and their love for
(181) the good and beautiful. Song collectors from outside the
Island have found little and assumed that song had been
(114) swept away. Discretion is certainly needed for song col-
[533] lection! Years ago in Bernera I had been told of a pretty
love lament I had not heard. Calling with my hosts to
125 invite him to their house that evening, we found the singer,
533 a burly crofter of fifty or so. We had been about to
183 mention the word 'song', when the word was checked on
our lips by a swift, warning glance. The singer lived with
his old mother and she must not be told that her son went
533 out on such an errand! Nevertheless, Islanders them-
178 selves are collecting many unpublished songs, where
strangers failed. The Laxdale School choir wins prizes at
[814] many a national gathering or *Mod*, for their spirited singing
of songs, many of them unpublished. Owing in part to
their very isolation, these songs have remained as pure in
form as in the Catholic Isles, whether in time and rhythm
or in scale and mode. Thus the sub-intervals or 'quarter-
tones' of the modal scale add subtlety to the melodic line
of an air, as in the melodies of Wales or of distant India.[1]
These intervals are rarely heard on concert platforms,
being unrecognised by many 'Mod medallists'. They
are rarely known to professional musicians trained to
the mechanical scale of the piano, and who are asked,
as adjudicators, to award praise or criticism by alien
standards.

181 Courtesy and modesty are noticeable among the young

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[1] M. Kennedy-Fraser, Preface, *Songs of the Hebrides*, vol. i. Cf. Glyn-Williams, *Welsh Song and Dance* (Curwen, 1936). For India see A. H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindustan* (1914), pp. 104 ff., and H. A. Popley, *The Music of India* (1921); cf. A. Geddes in A. Karpelès (ed.), *L'Inde et son âme*, Paris, 1927. While published phonographic records of Indian singing normally illustrate these intervals, those of Gaelic Hebridean singers rarely do, as they are accustomed to alter to suit a piano.

181 people, although life in crowded quarters and daily con-
cern with the rearing of animals make for a frankness not
183 readily understood by strangers in Victorian times. The
848 standard of morality in the Isles is high, and the rate
of illegitimacy low. A courting custom, once common
584 through the northern and western coasts of Britain, as in
Norway and New England, was ' bundling ', a preliminary
to marriage, or bed-fellowship (*leapachas*). This is noted
[836] with disarming frankness by various writers.[1] After the
ceremonial and festivities of the betrothal, *reiteach*, a young
man was allowed to sleep beside his betrothed; but the
marriage ceremony was to precede, not follow, consummation. At wedding festivities, sweethearts found their way to the barn and took their rest together on the straw. In the shielings, too, courtship was given some freedom: trust is a necessity where there could not be total restraint.

585 To what extent marriage sometimes took place or may still occur after consummation and the expectation of a first child, only one with close local knowledge could say. ' Hand-fasting ', marriage made binding only by the conception of a first child, was an ancient custom. Two things must be remembered. First, the strength of parental benediction and authority, backed by a community in which all knew one another from childhood, gave binding force to betrothal and its obligations; and ceremonies such as that of the kertching effectually replaced legal and ecclesiastical marriage when there was neither registrar, minister nor priest. Secondly, marriages blest with children tend to be happy ones. Fulfilling the cycle of life, children also provided the support to old age needed among peasants living on the edge of poverty.

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[1] W. A. Smith, *Lewsiana*; and Brand Report, 1902.

(v) A CHANGING CHURCH: 1820–1943

175 795 [178] Underneath the doctrinal severity of the Presbyterian Gael, there has continued some of the cheerful faith in living, the belief in mutual aid, the tolerance and calm, breathed in our native religious lore. The sternest Presbyterianism, which swept the North-west after 1820, still makes the Gaelic North its fortress in Scotland. Yet the maintenance in the Scottish Church of a doctrine of universal love was due, no less, to Gaelic ministers, and seems to have owed its rebirth to Gaelic tradition through these men. The question of continuity is important: for this doctrine, embracing all mankind, not only the predestined few, has profoundly influenced the attitude to life in all Protestant lands, throughout a century crucial to human development.

175 795 793 The most notable of the Scots ministers concerned with the doctrine of the Atonement were John McLeod Campbell and his younger friend, Norman Macleod. Born in Argyllshire in 1800, McLeod Campbell was ordained in 1825, and preached the assurance that God loved, and Christ died, for all men. For this he was charged with heresy by the Church of Scotland, and deposed in 1831, a trial he bore " with saintly charity and patience ", refusing to found a new sect. In 1832 he went through the Highlands and Skye, preaching everywhere in Gaelic. A Moderate minister, John Maciver, who attended his services, said to him: " I never understood so much of your views before; now in the strength of God I will enquire more into them ". It was very different when he met his own cousin, Roderick McLeod, who eight years later swept the island of Skye into the Free Church and led the Evangelicals in the Hebrides. To his sister

175 Campbell wrote, " My reception by those who are called
795 'professors'", the lay leaders who 'professed' the
Evangelical doctrines, " was trying to the last. Holding
793 that Christ died for all seemed to them so fundamental
an error as to poison all my teaching." Thereafter,
175 Campbell retired, in Glasgow, to read, preach to a few,
793 and write, keeping in touch with Norman Macleod and
814 Erskine in Scotland, and in England with J. F. D. Maurice
(1805-72). After *Christ, the Bread of Life*, Campbell wrote
The Nature of the Atonement (1856). Readers felt not only
that he was one of the most lovable of men, but a profound
theologian, a view reinforced today. " Of all books that
have ever been written on the Atonement", wrote Dr.
Denney, " McLeod Campbell's is probably that which is
most completely inspired by the spirit of the truth with
which it deals. Its originality is spiritual as well as intellectual.
In speculative power he cannot be compared to
Schleiermacher, nor in historical learning to Ritschl; but
he walks in the light all the time, and everything he
touches lives."

175 Here then was a man who seemed to have been born
793 " in advance of his time", yet who came of a community
of deeply traditional cast. His life's thought was attuned
159 to that of his forebears, and expressed itself most intimately
perhaps in their own tongue. Campbell was born and
reared in Lorne, Argyllshire, which had first received
Protestantism through Carswell, who, in translating Knox's
" Liturgy " into Gaelic, incorporated the old Gaelic labour
prayer of the fishermen (Chapter VII (a)). The gentler form
of Protestantism brought in by Carswell may have allowed
the spirit of Celtic Christianity to survive among the people
of 'Mid-Argyll' and Lorne, down to Campbell's boyhood.
It may thus have contributed to the making of " a Scottish

175 saint, a character so eminently Christ-like ",[1] and to his
793 intimate beliefs, doctrine and wide influence. The same
159 Highland roots and deep charity characterised Dr. Norman
Macleod, author of the popular classic, *The Friend of the
Gael* (*Caraid nan Gaidheal*).

121 If a student of community ventures upon an interpreta-
tion of theology, it is because, to him, any attempt to under-
stand " the relations of God to mankind " must take account
of men's relations to one another. Ideas are transformed
by human experience during economic and social revolu-
tions, and in their turn they transform society. To make
contact with reality, theology must regard mankind: it
175 must be integrated with sociology. Because of its close
178 bond with communal life, the religious spirit, recorded in
Gaelic lore, was jarred, almost overwhelmed, when com-
182 munity was shaken to its foundations by the commercial,
agricultural and industrial revolution. Happily, the value
178 of communal Christianity has been acknowledged both by
79 Roman Catholics—notably (among Gaels) by the Rev.
Allan Macdonald of Eriskay—and by Protestants.[2] In
the Scottish Presbyterian Church today, the movement
which seems most deeply aware of the need for a new
society has acknowledged its debt to communal tradition
where this has been best maintained, that is, in the Isles.
Seeking to aid Christian endeavour, international and
national, this movement has turned for inspiration to Iona.
[771] In Iona, of which the noble cathedral belongs to the Church
of Scotland but is open for service to all denominations,
Presbyterians have found a new symbol.

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[113] [1] Canon Vaughan, cited by the Rev. Norman Maclean (*Scotsman*, 21st Aug. 1943).

[2] " The Church should interpret the Love of God by a flaming zeal for the redress of the social order." (The Very Rev. Prof. John Baillie, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, at St. Andrews, 1943.)

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CH. VIII RELIGION AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

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"The Iona Community is a Brotherhood of men within the Church of Scotland seeking to find the implications of the Kingdom of God for modern society. During the summer months they worship, work and live together on Iona, rebuilding the ruined Abbey on a co-operative basis. Half the Brotherhood are young clergy pledged to work for two years in the difficult places of the cities (after three months in Iona), emphasising the place of the Church in the New Community that is emerging in the world. The other half are skilled artisans who desire to express their labour as a ministry within the Priesthood of all Believers and create—in the building—a microcosmic witness of how labouring is transformed when seen as a Sacrament. The Brotherhood is based on Reformation principles. [221] Several members of the Community are married. At present the artisans return to the ordinary labour market in the winter time."[1]

[461] In the Iona Community, theology is linked to communal labour and the re-shaping of society; and its symbolic centre, Iona, is more than a literary name, or a historic ruin, to those who have set about rebuilding its cathedral tower, cloister and surrounding dwellings. Continuity is exemplified in its leader, the Rev. George F. Macleod, a descendant of Dr. Norman Macleod, the friend of McLeod Campbell. The significance of this Community to the theme of this chapter lies in the endeavour of its members to learn, by help of ancient native ways, new ways of Christian life in their own land. The attempt to link industrial Scotland, and lands beyond, to the Gaelic West, is a notable recognition of what Celtic Christianity, maintained and renewed by communal tradition, has yet to give the world.

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[1] From the magazine of the Iona Community, *The Coracle*.

CONCLUSION

(CHAPTERS V TO VIII)

175 178 105 Manifestly, prevailing views of the relationships of chief and people, and above all, of the people to one another, must be revised, even reversed. So must widespread views of the relation of clerical to ' lay ' members in the living, though unseen, Church. The enduring character of the people's primitive faith, from its early arrival to our time, may be almost unique in Western Christendom; distance and sheer physical poverty proved to be its protection. Had they been better preserved, the temporal and spiritual traditions of the Eastern Gael, and also of Scots Lowlanders, might well justify a revision of views. In the Isles again and again the people were placed under ' Authority ' —under laird and soldier, legislator and official, priest and pastor, orthodox cleric and unorthodox ' intellectual '. Should not each of these ask with humility whether they and their predecessors have not often misled those who might have led them, mistaught those from whom they might have learned ?

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMIC CHANGES: 1750–1919

(A) TRANSITION: MIGRATION, FISHING AND KELP-MAKING

175 UNTIL the 'Forty-five the township had lived an
433 almost self-contained life. Its traditional economy
was self-sufficient except for two indispensable
[621] commodities—salt for the housewife and iron for the smith.
[427] Beyond this, the chief demand for payment was the rent
to the lord, with tithes for the kirk. For these needs and
[794] demands a step towards production for exchange was re-
[437] quired, the more so that what was exported might include
the very necessities of life in 'bad years'. The rent was
paid largely by the sale of a surplus steer or two, and
175 drovers called for the cattle. By 1790, if not before, two
317 or three open boats set out annually from Uig, for instance,
for Glasgow, laden with salt beef and dried salt fish.
436 Although salt seems of little account today, it once bulked
[435] large in the Budget, its price being heightened by duty,
especially after 1707: "as dear as salt", was a saying, *cho
[251] daor ris an t-salluinn.* Salt was needed to preserve the
carcase of a 'cattle-beast' or sheep killed in autumn, and
175 for cod and herring curing. Wrecks were valuable, as on
433 all infertile undeveloped coastlands, both for their timber
and their iron. Cairds or tinkers occasionally brought
[326] metal goods; or a packman called, as strange a figure then

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175 as some Indian pedlar one meets on the road may seem
433 now. An older packman's tale of his long tramps, of the
[326] people's poverty and hospitality, must have resembled
the mingled plaints and praise one hears from an Indian
[443] pedlar today! But in the past only a speaker of Gaelic
[191] could find his way among the people. Almost until 1900,
if not still later, Gaelic speech was to prove a social bond,
[197] but ignorance of English speech an economic barrier.

The transition to increased exchange, with migration,
175 permanent and temporary, tended to make for specialisa-
433 tion. About 1795, *Statistical Accounts* enumerated, for
every hundred families, two or three smiths, wrights (or
463 carpenters), a shipwright or some boat-makers, a few
[178] weavers, tailors, and perhaps a miller. Each of these held
some corn land, individually or in shares, with rights on
the common. The line between plain crofters (to use a
later term) and crofter-craftsmen was not easily drawn, and
different writers wrote as they judged best. In Lochs,
80 per cent were fishers and net-makers. On the open
shores of the west, in Barvas parish (in which three-fourths
of the men were also 'fishers'), kelp-making was a seasonal
[427] occupation. In Stornoway parish, where sub-tenants paid
30s. to 60s. in rent, with twelve days' service, they sold ling
to their tacksmen at 5d. each, earned £1 a month on herring
boats, made kelp at 30s. per ton, and roads at 8d. a day.

175 In Harris in 1795 the eight 'bred' (or trained male)
286 weavers worked only for 'the gentry': the laird, the
tacksmen and their families. The rest of the weaving
462 was done by the women, giving a ratio of only one male
weaver to fifty-five families. But in Lewis male weavers
were commoner—one to every twenty to thirty families
was the ratio—as if the practice of home weaving by the
women was less universal there, even at that date.

175 About the seventeenth century there was introduced
433 the making of *aqua vitae*, *uisge-beatha* or 'whisky', an
addition to the ancient drink of home-brewed beer or ale
273 (*lionn*), a pleasant brew still tolerated by the Excise. In
[427] order to pay the rent, the making of whisky from home-grown
barley must have consumed a precious foodstuff.
[651] The small bulk of whisky facilitated export by tacksman
or Factor, and it also served to tickle the palate, cure the
[651] ills and cheer the spirits of the crofters themselves. But
before 1800 'the Gauger' was in the land, though there
were undoubtedly whisky stills that escaped his eye. In
some of the old houses a hollow space was left at a selected
spot between the inner and the outer walls, to conceal what
was not meant to be seen. A pleasant picture survives of
[511] the eighteenth century. It is told of a man of exceptional
prosperity, that when he laid his head on a pillow "he
could hear on the one side the clacking of his corn mill and
on the other the babble of his still". What more could
[427] the good man want? Nevertheless, the increase of distillation
as a legitimate home industry by which to pay the rent
[671] (in kind or by sale), followed by legislation prohibiting all
but large stills, first encouraged the Islanders in a taste for
strong drink, then tempted them to smuggling and breaking
the law.[1] Seaforth started two distilleries at Stornoway,
importing barley for the purpose. By 1825 these had ousted
the illicit stills, but they were closed about 1870.[2]

175 From a perilously narrow margin of subsistence, periodically
178 overstepped in famines, the Islanders passed to a
larger measure of production for sale, and in the second
434 half of the eighteenth century population increased. Its
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[113] [1] Cf. D. Stewart of Garth, *Sketches of the Highlanders*, 1821, vol. i, pt. ii, sec. v.

[2] Brand Report, 1902.

175 growth followed the increases in potato-growing and fish-
178 ing, in income and food production, and the introduction
434 of vaccination against smallpox, which had formerly taken
a heavy toll of child life.[1] This increase found an outlet
[433] in emigration to the Colonies, often led by departing tacks-
[751] men though discouraged at first by the Island lairds. For
example, in July 1773, 840 people sailed from Lewis.
175 "Alarmed by this, their master . . . came down from
434 London to treat with the remainder of his tenants. What
are the terms asked, think you? 'The land at the old
167 rents, the augmentation paid for three years back to be
refunded, and his Factor to be immediately dismissed!'"
[214] Although the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, from which this
quotation is taken, went on to say that it was expected that
the demands would be acceded to, or the Island would
become a desert, the Factor was retained.

175 The pressure of population can be imagined when the
167 appalling conditions of transport overseas are remembered.
A case is known of 700 Gaelic emigrants setting out from
505 the Clyde across the Atlantic in a vessel for which the
maximum human cargo of negro slaves permissible was
400. The regulations governing the transport of slaves
did not apply to the transport of 'freemen'. In quoting
this case, D. F. Macdonald suggests that while it was in
the interest of slave-owners that their slaves should arrive
in the Plantations alive, it was rather in the interest of
manufacturers to discourage emigration so as to keep a
supply of labour at home with which to meet their growing
demands and fill the gaps due to a high mortality, particularly among workers newly arrived from the country.[2]
It would also seem as if it had not been in the interests of
landlords to improve passenger regulations at that time,

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[1] Brand Report, 1902, p. xiv.

[2] *Scotland's Shifting Population, 1750–1850* (1941).

000 landlords to improve passenger regulations at that time.

175 Wars brought enlistment in the Highland regiments,
162 the Navy and Merchant Marine. Owing to migrations of
[702] all kinds, males came to be outnumbered by females, then
as later (100 males to 114 females, 1931).[1] In Lewis in
[167] 1795 the proportion was 100 to 111, and in Harris 100 to
124. From this period onwards the 'export of men' con-
175 tinued, modified by the reserve for war. Men were trained
162 for the Naval Reserve and Militia; and in 1900 for instance
702 800 men were training at Fort George and 2500 sailors
were in the Reserve. The maintenance of a reserve for the
Navy was one of the strongest pleas for the framing of the
Crofters Act.

175 A new resource, important to the Islanders after 1750,
824 was kelp-making, the cutting and burning of seaweed upon
the shore, for use in the manufacture of alkali in the glass
323 and soap industries. From 1770 onwards the price rose,
388 heightened first by an import duty, then by the Napoleonic
175 Wars. Estimating from the high prices, averaging over
£10 per ton from 1800 to 1823, Sir John Sinclair put the
824 value of the annual produce (20,000 tons) at £200,000. "It
435 may appear surprising", he remarks, "how that sum could
be of such importance to 80,000 people"; but he goes
on to point out that this gave the additional cash needed
to supplement their subsistence. But even when Sinclair
wrote in 1825, the industry was in peril. Failure and loss
occurred almost immediately after, with disastrous effect.

175 It is complained in the *New Statistical Account* that
433 owing to the summer-time work of kelp-making up to
1830, the people could give little attention to the crofts, so
[511] that their extension must almost have ceased. Nor could

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[1] In 1951 the ratio in Lewis was 100 males to 112 females, and in Harris, 100 to 110.

175 small savings, if any, have been put to the purchase of fishing
511 gear and boats, for fishing, too, was summer work. By
[433] 1833 the poverty of the Outer Islesfolk and the bankruptcy
of the landlords were such that Parliamentary attention
was called to the state of the Hebrides. Poverty continued
to be extreme, but need turned the people to fishing.
[433] The loss of revenue to the lairds led to their making sheep
farms—somewhat unwillingly—with local evictions: in
Lewis chiefly from Park and from north of Stornoway, and
in Harris notably from the western Machars to the eastern
[423] Bays. In spite of this, it also brought about the sale of
[621] Harris by Macleod, and finally of Lewis by Seaforth in
1844.[1]

(B) NEW OWNERSHIP AND CAPITAL IN LEWIS: 1844–78

175 Lewis was bought by Mr. James Matheson, a gentleman
423 of Highland family, whose fortune had been made in China.
Sir James (as he became) put much capital, effort and
goodwill into the management and improvement of the
Island. Of the amounts expended we may distinguish, so
far as possible, what he spent as a rich man for his private
[131] pleasure from what he spent for the people. No sooner
had Matheson bought the Island than the 'potato famine'
of 1845–46 broke out. The terrible loss of life in Ireland,
and the depopulation of that country which followed, would
have been equalled in the Isles but for the action of
landowners like Matheson—who were the descendants of
'kinsmen', not of alien conquerors—and also of subscribers

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[1] A sketch map of Harris showing the areas cleared (1816–54) and areas settled as a result, together with those re-settled by government help after 1900, is given by J. B. Caird, *Scot. Geog. Mag.*, vol. 67, 2, 1951, p. 94.

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423 in Scottish cities, who came forward again in 1888 and in
731 1925. Of the £33,000 Matheson expended on meal and
175 seed potatoes for relief, about half was repaid in labour by
the recipients. Here are the outlays reclassified from the
747 Brand Report (1902, p. xv):

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Castle buildings and grounds and shooting lodges			£120,000
Buildings and Land reclamation		£100,000	
Industries and Communications:—			
Chemical Works, for manufacturing paraffin oil from peat	£33,000		
Roads and Bridges	25,000		
Brickworks (from local clay)	6,000		
Patent Slipway, Quays, etc., at Stornoway	10,000		
		74,000	
Other expenditure:—			
Net Losses on Steamers and Mails	£32,000		
Industrial and Other Schools	12,000		
Emigration (2200 persons)	12,000		
Miscellaneous	1,000		
Relief (Meal, etc.), gross outlay	33,000		
		90,000	
Total expenditure, other than on Castle, etc.			264,000
Original Cost of Island			190,000
GRAND TOTAL			£574,000

Thus, of a capital outlay of over half a million pounds, roughly a quarter of a million was spent directly on the development of the estate. The rental in 1844 (exclusive of feu-duties) was nearly £11,000, and this rose to £18,000 within a few years, though it had been reduced to £15,000 at the end of the century. It will be seen that the praise given to Sir James Matheson for his liberal expenditure was well won, if allowance is made for the standards of his class and generation. Yet of the £120,000 he spent upon

175 the mansion, lodges, and grounds or 'policies', much was
747 built and laid out for himself at the time, though part was
for reclamation. This contrasts with his provision for
423 those whose homeland he had bought—the sum spent
upon his own mansions and grounds being nearly half that
spent directly for the good of some 20,000 fellow-Gaels.

175 Matheson was not technically equipped for his chosen
task of 'reconstruction'. Nor was he fitted by trade in
157 the East for the leadership of a people accustomed, in
[623] spite of dire poverty, to considerable freedom. Ignorant,
one gathers, of the language of the people, his choice of a
175 later Factor was hardly a happy one. Tradition in Lewis
speaks of this Donald Munro as an 'autocrat', and evidence
623 in 1874 confirms it. In addition to being the Factor for
423 an ageing man and so holding economic sway over the
people, he held seventeen public and semi-public offices
661 in the Island, from Justice of the Peace to Captain of the
Volunteers, still other offices being held by his clerk! The
extent of his sway is also shown by his having served
summonses of removal upon fifty-six families on his own
authority. As a result of the treatment of the officer sent
to serve the summonses, three crofters were tried on a
charge of "assault committed on an officer of the law in
revenge for having executed his duty". When asked in
court if Sir James would not have disapproved of this step
and the manner of its execution, Munro replied that it was
his practice "never to trouble Sir James with small
matters". "Then you consider the eviction of fifty-six
families a small matter?" was the retort. These 'Bernera
rioters' were found not guilty, they and their neighbours
were left in possession, and soon after the Factor demitted
175 office.[1] Lewismen felt the result to be a moral victory,
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[1] Brand Report, 1902, p. lxxi.

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which heartened them for resistance in common against landlord and State, both in the agitation for reform of the Land Laws during the next ten years and in their demands for 'the return' of sheep farms to crofting, which continued until all these were divided soon after 1919 and the ex-Servicemen's return.

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Expenditure of capital in Lewis during more than a generation, from the purchase of the estate in 1844 down to the death of Sir James in 1878, helped to maintain the people and provide relief in bad seasons. It left Lewis greatly improved in roads and paths, in sea communications and in buildings of various sorts. 175 646 311 [161] Two real efforts had been made to utilise Lewis peat, industrially for paraffin oil, and agriculturally by reclamation. Given the resources and knowledge of a century ago, these attempts did their initiator credit. Yet failure left the Islanders to continue crofting without either an additional occupation or the extension of croft land, even at the high population density (per acre of arable) which Matheson had found on his purchase in 1844.

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Subdivision of crofts was the first result. A father would simply divide his croft between himself and a son, who might not even be entered on the rent-roll of the estate, and the two would inevitably need more stock than before upon the common. The second result was simply 'squatting': the building of a house, perhaps with a tiny kailyard, on a piece of the 'skinned' land. As building went on overcrowding old sites, filth accumulated and springs were contaminated, crofting was hindered and cows became fewer per family, in spite of overstocking. By 1886 about two-thirds the number of the cottars and squatters found in 1914 were already in occupation. In 1914 there were over 3000 statutory crofts in Lewis, their

175 rent averaging 31s., in addition to which there were over
423 1000 houses of the cottar class and 300 houses of the squatter class.[1]

Lastly, Sir James trained no successor to follow up or improve upon his experience. At his death in 1878 Sir James was succeeded by his widow, and, nearly twenty years after, she was followed by a nephew and his son. But the expenses of Stornoway Castle and its burdens, accompanied by lower rents, weighed down the new proprietors.
[228] In 1918 the estate was sold to Lord Leverhulme, who shortly afterwards purchased Harris too, with a view to his great schemes of fishery development.

(c) FISHERIES: 1750–1914

175 For the greatest expanding industry of the northern
471 coastlands, Matheson had done comparatively little even at Stornoway. In 1883, a former Factor (Mr. Mackenzie
228 of Calgarry) stated that he had constantly asked for aid to the fisheries, especially by the building of harbours, pointing out that the landlord would reap benefit in rent.[2] But Matheson had replied that the fishermen and fish-curers, the people engaged in the trade, should do this work
[654] for themselves. By the end of the century, harbours were being planned and built with State aid in the north, west and south-east of the Island (at Ness, Carloway and Uig,
[439] and Tarbert, Harris). In 1900 the Islanders possessed 150 herring boats, and in that year five boats from the Stornoway District sailed for the first time to Yarmouth,
[511] and two to Lerwick. For the next dozen years there were real hopes that prosperity could be maintained.
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[1] *Royal Commission on Housing*, 1917, p. 212. Cf. *Fraser Report on Cottars in Lewis*, 1888, and the recommendations by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, *Report on Rural Housing in Scotland*, 1937, pp. 56-63, 75-77.

[2] Brand Report (1902).

175 real hopes that prosperity could be maintained. In 1914
228 war came, followed by sweeping changes in international
178 trade. These changes left the Island fishermen workless,
and with wrecked and rotting boats. In twenty years the
[439] number of Scotland's fishermen was halved, and the remainder
all but ruined. For guidance, past progress and
past losses should be reviewed, in order to see what
measures can be taken to restore prosperity.

121 For the slow growth of a native fishing industry, two
175 factors were to blame: the poverty of environment, together
with the unsettled state of the Isles, and also, it
182 seems, the jealousy of urban interests. These were represented,
228 to 1603 and even after, by the Royal Burghs, and
from 1707 by the British Parliament. The Royal Burghs
certainly developed Scottish trade and industry through
their own ports, but they feared competition, and opposed
any direct contact of other ports, such as Stornoway, with
foreign fishers and traders. From the days of the MacLeods
[648] this difficulty had hampered regional development. It
was in spite of royal prohibition that Seaforth encouraged
Dutch curers to settle, an arrangement interrupted by war
with Holland in 1653 and 1665. Curers from Caithness
and the East Coast were encouraged to replace the Dutchmen,
and from time to time through the succeeding century
efforts were made from the south to form fishing companies,
and in the Island to encourage local fishers to profit
from example in the catching of herring and of ling, hake
and cod.[1] The people fished for food, with fishing-rods
from the shore, and in frail boats in the lochs, and if they
[648] could, they also sold a surplus. Fish were not only taken
direct to Glasgow, but sold at home, first to Scots and foreign
and later to British boats, of which ninety visited Lochs in

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[1] W. C. Mackenzie, 1919, p. 65 ff.

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175 1794, for instance, their crews not only fishing but also
228 buying from local fishers. Islanders occasionally earned
a pittance as pilots, for until the charting of these rocky
coasts navigation was most dangerous.

175 The herring industry was in the hands of 'adventurers'
228 (who 'ventured' their capital), and the Islanders benefited
little. The British export was aided by a bounty which
[472] helped to capture the Continental market; but, as Adam
[439] Smith pointed out, no bounty was given to the small, open
boats suitable for the north-west lochs. Thus the operation
175 of the Salt Duty after 1707 and of the bounty system from
228 before 1745 until 1786, illustrates two of the recurrent
blights upon "Public Administration" in the Isles. As Day
656 wrote, their interests have had to suffer "either deliberately, for the benefit of other parts, or other classes in the kingdom, or inadvertently from ignorance".[1] Although the bounty system was widened to include small boats after 1786, the Salt Tax remained until 1817.

To overcome difficulties, the British Fisheries Society
was founded with Government support in 1786. Although
Stornoway then seemed too far afield, the Society's concen-
tration upon larger settlements foreshadowed Lord Lever-
[311] hulme's principles after 1918. At Ullapool, Tobermory
and Lochbay (Skye), and at Wick, quays and stores were constructed and dwelling-houses built, with croft land and grass for a cow, to be reclaimed. Although concentration at Wick led to the sale of the three western properties about 1842, the Society had done some good work in the West. The chief difficulty of the West Coast north of the Clyde area and south of Stornoway District remained: the lack of a well-marked seasonal migration of herring.

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[1] J. P. Day, *Public Administration in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 1918.

175 228 251 458 From the Napoleonic Wars to 1914 the amount of herring cured on the West Coast of Scotland rose and fell. In 1810-14 the East Coast cure was half the West Coast cure, but the peace of 1815 brought the capture of the Continental markets and the East Coast herring export leapt up. It averaged 500,000 barrels from 1850 to 1870, a million from 1880 to 1900, and one to two million barrels [439] until 1914. With the decline in the export to the Plantations, the West Coast export fell, to rise by 1890 and reach a peak from 1900 to 1914. Thus, although no more than from a tenth to a fifth of the East Coast yield, that of the West Coast had risen greatly.[1] Of this, the Stornoway cure formed the major part.

175 228 The chief early type of catch, of white fish (cod, ling and hake), was developed too, and swelled to a peak by 1900, then dwindled and fell. The average Stornoway District catch of white fish for a dozen years to 1900 was valued at over £100,000, much of it caught by local boats, and some of it cured at small 'creeks' (*e.g.* on the west of the Island, on Loch Roag, notably at Carloway). The cure, a strong coarse food, was shipped to Ireland and the Clyde; but after 1900, fresh trawled fish replaced the cured. From £100,000 before 1900 the value fell to little over £10,000 in 1912-13, £1000 in 1920, and half that in 1921—½ per cent of the value in 1900!

[471] [452] [652] Thus the herring fishing became the most important to the Islanders, at first by employment on East Coast boats. Later they purchased boats and gear for themselves, helped principally by advances from Island and East Coast curers, though also by State loans.

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[1] *Fishery Board for Scotland*, Table 25 (1938), and Table 23: 6000 barrels in 1790-95; 80,000 in 1870-75; 100,000 in 1912, and 160,000 in 1913. For fair comparison with Table 25, about 25 per cent should be added to quantities, as explained in the notes to the Tables, on the 'seastick', and final reduced, or 'bungpacked', state of barrelled herring (listed in Table 23).

175 though also by State loans. The efforts of the Island
228 fishermen in the sixty years from 1880 to 1939 can be
471 summed up in the values of their boats. From 1880 to
458 1900 values rose by one-half, but had fallen somewhat before the war of 1914–18 (to £20,000). Immediately after, the purchase of steam drifters at Stornoway and the fitting their herring boats with motors by the fishermen had tripled the value (close on £70,000 in 1920). But markets fell almost at once, and losses continued. By 1938 the Island fishing fleet was valued (or overvalued) at a quarter that figure, and was worth less than the fleet of sixty years before.[1]

(D) THE CROFTERS ACTS, 1886–1919: TOWNSHIP, LANDLORD AND STATE

175 Centuries of cattle-keeping having left the grass moors
236 in good condition, the profits of sheep-farming rose after
1770 with the price of wool for manufacture. Protected from foxes by modern guns, and handled in large flocks, the newly introduced Cheviot and Blackface sheep and
[178] lambs could graze in their thousands. In many estates the introduction of additional sheep, with the crofters' cattle, was tried and worked; but in others the people were
175 ruthlessly evicted. Although offset by many acts of wise
236 economy and generous aid, evictions were too frequent during the next half-century, and they engendered growing
427 bitterness.

Whereas in other Isles, and on the machar of Harris, the small joint tenantry and subtenantry were evicted in

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[113] [1] Figures 1828–33 quoted from J. P. Day, *Public Administration*, 1918; 1888–1900 from Appendix K, Report, 1902; 1912–1938 from *Fishery Board for Scotland* Tables (Table E-IB, 1912–21, and Table 15 and A.I., 1938).

175 favour of sheep farmers, in Lewis there had been very few
236 evictions. Early in the days of the sheep-farming boom,
427 one of the Seaforths had been offered ' double rents ', and
refused them rather than turn the people away. Later
on, when the wars were over, and when the Seaforth
fortunes were failing, subtenants and their cattle had been
replaced by sheep stock in three tacks around Broad Bay
(at Coll and Gress and at Aignish at the base of Eye
[731] Peninsula). The failure of kelp-burning and the potato
famine brought acute want in rocky parts of the Isle, and
led to the desertion of their homes by certain communities.
175 In 1863, out of a total of forty crofters in a township of
16 Barvas parish, more than half emigrated by help of Sir
James Matheson. Local resettlement was aided by Sir
[423] James, who provided horses and implements for Uig people
who moved to Shawbost (6 miles north of Loch Roag).
Abandoned places became farms; and although agricultural
prices fell and Sir James made little profit from the
erection of buildings and the drainage, dyking and fencing
on farms, land was improved, and better stock was bred,
of which some was available to improve that of crofters,
175 too. Twenty years later, however, increasing numbers
427 increased the demand for crofts, and the people sought to
reoccupy their forebears' land. In this, the Lewismen
[171] shared in a widespread movement, extending from the
Scottish Isles to Wales and Ireland.

175 As a result of the real sufferings of the people in the
654 Highlands and Isles, and of the growing interest in the
land shown in the country and in Parliament, where Irish
[648] members made themselves the crofters' allies, the Government
in 1883 appointed a Royal Commission of Enquiry
under a fair-minded judge, Lord Napier. As a remedy,
the Commissioners recommended measures based upon

175 the legal recognition, improvement and enlargement of the
654 ' township ', defined as a farm, or part of a farm, occupied
in common or division by several tenants, three or more in
[632] number. The executive officer of the township, the Constable,
[666] was to be elected annually by the community.

The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886 did
175 embody three of the chief recommendations made, but the
first, the recognition of the township, was omitted. The
671 Crofters Act gave security of tenure, compensation for
427 improvements, and some facilities for enlargement of holdings.
Security was perpetual and could be passed on by the crofter within his family, though renounceable by him upon one year's notice, upon fair statutory conditions. The chief conditions were payment of rent, fair maintenance of the holding, and respect of agreements with the proprietor. Although this was not a recommendation of the Commission, the Act also provided for official revision of rents. A ' fair rent ' was to be proportionate to the produce of the croft, and this, together with the value for improvements, was to be fixed on application to a body of the three Commissioners, ' the Crofters Commission '. In Lewis between 1887 and 1912 this brought a lowering of the rental by over a quarter and the cancelling of two-thirds of arrears accumulated earlier. The rental for a ' croft ' was to be below £30; this figure was raised to £50 in 1911, except in Lewis, where £30 remained the limit in order to allow the excessive congestion to be relieved by division even of small farms.

The passing of the Small Landholders' Act of 1911 completed the code known as the Landholders' Acts, 1886–1911. The Land Court replaced the Crofters' Commission.
[647] The Department (then still the Board) of Agriculture took over the powers of the Congested Districts

175 Board, created in 1897 to develop agriculture, fishing and
671 home industries, to form new holdings, to assist migration,
427 and to provide public works such as roads, bridges and
piers. These powers were further extended by the Land
[647] Settlement (Scotland) Act of 1919, passed to provide land
for ex-Servicemen.[1]

The Crofters' Act granted to the individual crofter most of the rights advocated by the Napier Commission, and other advantages besides, but it did not impose upon him the corresponding duties. As Day wrote, " The landlord was compelled to act in the interests of the crofter; the crofter was not compelled to act in his own interest ".
[632] The Act discarded the core of the Napier Commission's scheme, that of " a recognised local community, the township, with an executive officer, the Constable, working for the improvement of the township, by fencing, draining and other works, with the assistance of the proprietor ", the whole scheme enforceable by " legal compulsion on either
[829] side ". As a Gael might say, the Act discarded *duty-right* of members of the community to one another.

175 As a result, peace did not descend upon the Island at
423 once. The demand for land continued, followed up by
attempts to settle upon it, in spite of police and armed force.
[668] A legal victory was to be pressed home. In Lewis the

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[113] [1] A useful summary of the legislation is given by the Scot. Econ. Committee's Report, 1938, pp. 17-21, and a searching review in J. P. Day's *Public Administration in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 1918, a work of real social insight.

The Act of 1919 is still the main enactment under which land settlement schemes may be undertaken in Scotland; but the Agriculture (Scotland) Act 1948 included new provision to allow the creation of holdings up to 75 acres in extent and £150 in rental. After the Second World War a more cautious policy was adopted in regard to settlement of ex-Servicemen and little progress has been made in carrying out schemes, despite many unfulfilled applications in the Hebrides and elsewhere where the demand for crofts exceeds the supply.

175 death of Sir James had left his widow in possession of the
423 estate, a lady with little training for its responsibilities.
668 In south-east Lewis, in November 1887, a body of landless
men attempted to settle on the peninsula of Park, Loch
Seaforth, after which some of the illegal settlers or raiders
were tried and acquitted, and fourteen small crofts with
outrun were provided. In January 1888, 300 men marched
from Barvas to petition Lady Matheson that the sheep
farm of Galson should be allotted to some of them at a fair
valuation, as they could not live on their tiny plots. Lady
Matheson refused to consider the petition until the arrears
of rent due by Barvas tenants were paid. Less than a week
after, sheep were driven off Aignish (Eye) and police, reinforced
by marines and soldiers, arrested eleven men. Two
days later, more sheep runs were invaded, fences
[701] demolished, and sheep driven off. On January 20, 500
marines were ordered to Lewis (of whom 200 actually
[687] sailed). On February 2, the Aignish raiders were found
guilty and sentenced to terms of from nine to fifteen months'
imprisonment. After this the disturbances gradually
passed away. Yet the seeds of trouble only lay dormant;
they were to spring up a generation later, and again after
the war of 1914-18.

175 In defending the Napier Commission's plan to recog-
632 nise the township, one may accept their definition of it as
a farm held by tenants, singly or in common. Yet it must
427 be remembered that the word 'farm' had come to have a
very elastic meaning. The joint farm-group was once the
[241] active group for labour in common; but if the 'township'
included several joint-farms, as it generally had in the
Island, its people formed a relatively 'passive' community.
Members of the township enjoyed rights in common, and
shared in duties of observance; but they had seldom to

175 co-operate in active endeavour. It was all the more
632 important to have an elected 'official', the Constable,
427 one of themselves but placed in authority. There could
be no restitution of the old joint farms where they had
[241] been broken down by migration. Yet it should have been
[624] still possible to extend the old spirit to the larger townships,
as the Commissioners held.

175 Again, the constitution of the township is bound up
632 with the rights of common pasture upon the moor all the
year, and in winter even on unfenced arable; but the
423 Crofters' Act failed to regulate the rights and obligations
671 of Common Grazings. It slackened the authority of the
estate without restoring the hold of the tenant community upon its members. After five years the Government began to recognise the mistake, and passed the first Crofters' Common Grazings Regulation Act, permitting the crofters to elect a Common Grazings Committee. But it was ill-considered; most of all because non-crofters, that is, cottars and squatters without legal tenure, were not bound by the Regulations. On one hand they could not get permission to 'resume' (or enclose) a portion of the outrun, in order to reclaim it as a croft, without first obtaining the unanimous consent of the township's crofters; and in large
[233] townships there might always be an objector. Yet each
cottar could, and did, put on stock, a cow or two and a few sheep, so nullifying the possibility of discipline.

In 1908 a second Act was passed; but twenty years had allowed tradition to lapse and difficulties to accumulate. In Isle Scalpay (Tarbert) for instance, by 1909 there were only forty legitimate crofters, but eighty cottars; and the legal crofters would not take part in depriving any
[476] cottar of such grazing liberties as he exercised. All were
[462] neighbours and most were relations, and their principle

175 was to share; the children needed milk and the women
632 wool to work, while the men fished. As the Crofters'
423 Commission put it at the time, "Necessity has no law and
671 . . . it is scarcely possible to carry out . . . the Grazings
Acts in this island ". The position remains little changed.
[476] Still, in spite of sixty years' delay, and the law's failure to
[462] restore an executive, the Constable, to perform specified
duties as a member of the community, the Grazings Committees do perform useful functions with credit. They form nuclei with which proprietor, Government or cooperative agency actually deal, and the voluntary Clerk may shoulder considerable responsibility.

175 With regard to small occupiers paying less than £6
423 rent per annum and holding less than 10 acres and 250
671 acres of souming (or share of pasture), the Napier Com-
mission declined to recommend the bestowal of rights or immunities tending "to fix them in a condition from which they ought to be resolutely though gently withdrawn ". The Act, however, did grant small occupiers immunity from eviction, and made it hard for either landlord, State or fellow-crofters even to refuse house sites or fresh holdings, particularly in the crowded Lews. The squatter continues; indeed he is favoured, by escaping the payment of rent and rates though he shares in benefits. The ratepayers are proportionately, and unjustly, handicapped. But as isolation has diminished, landless squatters have been allowed to 'resume' portions of the common grazing for new holdings, as by common consent at Ness and in Lochs, after Lord Leverhulme's death.

175 A further recommendation of the Napier Commission
168 was to aid emigration. Now Sir James Matheson's aid in
1863 proved successful, but his later efforts met with no
167 response. There were then, and still may be, in the Island

175 some whose feelings and interests opposed emigration.
168 Free Church ministers foresaw that the beliefs they had
167 introduced would be shaken by travel; and their income,
like that of the merchants, would have disappeared as a
[647] result of depopulation. The Congested Districts Board,
however, sponsored two schemes of colonisation in 1888–89. In the first scheme thirty families, and in the second, fifty families were taken to Canada, mostly from the Island.[1] The first and smaller group repaid their loans and received their lands; but the second failed to do so, and the State was only reimbursed by sale of the land.

121 The story of the schemes suggests the lack of four
181 elements needed for success: promptitude in organisation;
sympathy with strictness, and a sufficiency of funds; a year's experience of new conditions or technical guidance, rather than segregation of the inexperienced without leadership; and choice of vocation as farmer or as farm servant. Many a crofter-emigrant has succeeded as a shepherd and farm hand or as an independent farmer; but not every Islesman, particularly a cottar or landless squatter, is fit to conduct a farm. Technically, an all-round experience of part-time crofting and fishing by rule of thumb does not train a man for farming in a new environment without even a year's apprenticeship. Success is possible in schemes which overcome initial difficulties by providing training, companionship and community life, in a suitable physical environment.

121 One further principle of communal life was the spiritual,
181 which Parliament and administration failed to grasp. The
most significant evidence in the Napier Commission was
771 that of A. Carmichael; and from this the Commissioners

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[113] [1] J. P. Day, 1918, pp. 123-125, from Reports of Congested Districts Board, and Crofters and Colonisation Commissioners (Fifteenth Report).

121 had learned that the spiritual sanctions of the township's
181 activities were not yet dead. Legal recognition of the
771 township's social economy would have encouraged constructive action in common. Communal responsibility, not merely private morality, would have had to be upheld. As it was, the people's acts of charity or justice modified the growing individualism of tenure and economic relationships. But with township duties to perform and a high standard of office to fulfil, the congregations could have maintained a common purpose; religion would have retained a deeper social meaning, binding neighbours as one. It is true that divisions rent the Island communities, as a result of the Evangelical reaction both from the lay patronage of the Moderates and their easy-going tolerance. Protestantism broke with the communal religion of the past and emphasised individual salvation, faith and doctrine, at the cost of schism. Hence, it appears less able to aid the renewal of the township than Catholicism, with its greater emphasis upon corporate unity, mutual aid and Christian works in common. Yet, if men of the township had been chosen to bear communal responsibility, then, 'living the life', would they not have re-learned 'the doctrine'? Ministers did not share in common responsibility, it is true, nor do they now. The Established Clergy dwelt apart upon their glebes, and the Evangelicals are housed in the village, but without a croft or a share of the scatt and a common grazing. Yet in youth as the sons of crofters, and after ordination also, they might have learned from chosen Elders.

000 Altogether, for reasons not only temporal but spiritual, the township with its elected officers should have won recognition. Given the responsibility which those who knew it believed it could still fulfil, the crofters' relations

000 to one another, to the landlord and to the State would have been profoundly different.

(II) STATE AID, THE LAND, AND THE CROFTERS' RESPONSE

175 Until 1914 the congestion in each Island township
162 dotted between the wide, lonely moors, had increased, and
362 it was still increasing. To every two legal crofters, either
a cottar or a landless squatter was to be found, on the
175 'skinned land' outside the crofts. Parliament, in 1886,
656 had discarded the Napier Commission's recommendations
to give powers to extend the crofts from portions of the
648 common, or to supply a house site and garden space for
[362] men of independent occupations such as fishermen. This
congestion embarrassed Government and local services.

427 The associated rating system was also at fault; indeed
it has still to be put right. For instance, a crofter's son—
656 able to make a living, say, as a fisherman, and about to marry but having no croft—was penalised by high rates, should he take up his proper status of a legal cottar at a small rent. Throughout the crofting counties, the legal crofter, as an agricultural landholder, was (and is) de-rated, and had only to pay one-eighth the rates for a non-agricultural holding of the same rental. Only since 1938 has the value of the house been assessed. A recognised cottar paying rent to an estate was rated as owner and occupier, being treated in fact as a feuar;[1] and as such he had to bear a heavy burden of rates, possibly of over 30s. in the £. Whereas if he 'lay low' and shared his father's or brother's

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[1] *Feuar*, in Scotland one who holds real estate in consideration of a stipulated annual payment; lit. on *feudal* tenure. Cf. J. P. Day (1918), pp. 383-384.

427 656 croft by subdivision, he would pay little, indirectly and by arrangement; while if he simply built a hut or house on a vacant spot he paid neither rates nor rent. Either course was illegal; yet it was too expensive for the landlord, however 'hard-hearted', to take legal proceedings to turn off a squatter. As for wholesale expropriation the suffering caused and the odium incurred would have involved—and would still involve—both landlord and State in insurmountable difficulties by starting fresh agitation, perhaps with outbreaks of law-breaking, repression and bad blood. Yet these anomalies still discourage, and the normal illegalities demoralise, all concerned.

656 178 511 12 [476] Because of the provision by State and local authorities of a growing range of services in other regions, and also because of the special reasons of Insular poverty, State action was increasingly taken in the Isles. To what extent have the Islanders responded, it may be asked; or how far may they have failed, in return for aid offered and benefits received? Let us begin with mutual aid practised among the people up to 1900, and then consider the repayment of loans and grants under different conditions. Observations by those in touch with the Island for many years, officially or privately, allow one to read between the lines and attempt an impartial judgment.

175 476 [657] As to the strength of independent mutual aid there could be no doubt. Up to the beginning of this century, the amounts expended on parish relief were 'almost nothing', and had shown no increase in preceding years. General poverty, anomalies in the rating system, and the mistakes such as the erection of poorhouses by the central administration, diminished resources; but the people generously gave help to their poorer neighbours in work and gifts. Except for a year of overwhelming crisis,

175 perhaps once in a generation, the neighbours were still the
476 best administrators for poor relief. On the whole, this
657 remained true to 1914.

As to financial assistance from the Government, the
175 evidence seems at first bewildering in its contradictions,
suggesting utter inconsistency on the part of the people.
657 Thus, the record of the Lewis-and-Harris fishermen, in
426 repaying loans for the purchase of boats, was the most honourable in the North-west. In 1900, of the total capital on barely 100 loans made to them, 83 per cent had been repaid, whereas on 150 loans elsewhere less than 60 per cent had been repaid.

175 Yet as to the record of Lewismen with regard to assistance for road-making, the Brand Report was significantly
653 reticent. In 1891 a road was planned direct to Stornoway from Loch Roag on the west coast at Carloway. This short-cut of sixteen miles was to shorten the distance by seven miles and so facilitate the transit of fish landed at Carloway. Crofter labour was employed as a means of 'self-help'. The road was, mistakenly, printed as complete on 'base maps' and other recent 'quarter-inch' maps. By 1901, £15,500 had been spent, a sum which exceeded the estimated cost, but only eight miles of road had been completed and five miles partially made, while three miles were quite incomplete. The estimate having been exceeded and "financial difficulties having arisen"—the contractor had gone bankrupt and the engineer was dismissed—the work came to a standstill, £10,000 more having been estimated as necessary to complete the road.
[181] Of that sum £8000 was granted.[1] But the road was left
[461] unfinished. These figures alone might not condemn

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[1] J. P. Day (1918), p. 328. Day added that "the work should now, more than twenty years after its start, be approaching completion"!

175 the work done—or rather not done—by the local labourers;
653 for deep peat has misled road engineers elsewhere.
But impartial observers have left no doubt that the work
461 was shirked—partly from the labourers' lack of will,
181 in other words from laziness, and partly from the not
unnatural desire that further grants might continue,
offering easy money. Inspection revealed deliberate and
combined concealment of bad work, road metal being
thrown on to give a surface which had no foundation.
The Carloway road, which was to help the Loch Roag
fishermen by rapid transport of fresh catches, was never
completed. The bad work of many contributed to the
undoing of all.

175 How are these two apparently contradictory responses
657 to help to be explained? The answer lies in the completely
different methods of expending the grants. A loan to
653 fishermen for a boat was put into their own responsible
121 hands. The hope of profit in which each could share
stimulated their enterprise; and where both the private
honour of each member and the corporate honour of each
crew was at stake, mutual obligation and team-spirit
spurred them to work. But road-making—a work many
had done for contractors elsewhere as navvies under
181 degrading conditions—was different. A Gael responds when
his imagination is fired, whether for selfish or unselfish
ends; but he can also enjoy leisure as to the manner born!
Not only was personal skill or effort in road-making of no
advantage to an individual; there was little to call out either
personal prowess or team-spirit in the work. Moreover,
little effort appears to have been made by the administration
to arouse ardour. The ultimate advantage of a good road
to the people on the west of the Island, as a whole, was
clear. Yet since bad work and delay led (at first) to further

181 grants, then, in the absence of an immediate goal, the combination of the corporate interest in bad work with natural inclination to an easy time proved overwhelming! The problem of assuring good work and prompt repayment is real: it calls for the right appeal to team-spirit coupled with personal responsibility. Many short roads to small new settlements have been economically built.

175 657 426 With regard to loans for settlement and housing, similar contrasts are found. Near Stornoway the farm of Aignish (Eye) was divided in 1905 into thirty-two fishermen's holdings (rented at £3). The Congested Districts Board lent £3600 for housing and spent £1600 on fencing and £450 on administrative expenses, a total of about £180 per holding; but in seven years the holders had paid only one-seventh of the annuities due, and were in arrears with the rent.[1] Yet on the housing loans made on a wide scale since 1919, there was mutual aid among neighbours and the repayment has been satisfactory.

SUMMARY: 1750—1914—1919

175 178 433 The transition from the old economy of mutual aid in self-support, little changed down to the 'Forty-five, to the development of production for sale had proceeded far by 1914. Yet change had not continued steadily. There had been fluctuations, from the land and back again, or towards individualism with returns to common action. Kelp-making, migration, and commercial fishing alternated in importance as means to earn a living without losing the
[731] anchorage of home. After the potato famine, a century
[166] ago, the people tended to move away from the outlying
[167] townships and emigrate; but the next generation agitated

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[1] J. P. Day (1918), pp. 312-314.

175 for a firmer hold upon the land and for a return to aban-
178 doned sites. The communal possession of joint farms, held
433 directly or under tacksmen, gave place to individual pos-
[731] session of crofts. Yet the legal recognition of perpetual
tenure in 1886 gave not only the crofter's home but the
[166] crofting neighbourhood a security unequalled in Britain.
The use of moor and machar in common was retained;
[167] but its control for improvement or reclamation by the
175 estate or the township was weakened, rather than strength-
ened, by the Crofters' Acts. Confusion grew—both upon
178 the arable land, subdivided, unenlarged and unimproved,
423 and also upon the common grazing, sorely overstocked in
427 spite of ever diminishing 'soumings' (or family shares) of
cattle. Rating difficulties and anomalies appeared. Communal discipline, maintained at sea by fishing, was weakened on land after the abolition of the joint farm-group, and almost nullified in the townships by subdivision and squatting.

175 A year before the potato famine of 1845, a new landlord
178 had brought good-will, capital and pioneering effort to
Lewis. These had been directed to experiments in the
433 reclamation and the industrial utilisation of deep peat.
Helped by employment on these and other works, the
[427] population of Lewis continued to increase, when increase
[311] in Harris was arrested for a generation. Yet while neither
experiment with peat met with success, little aid had been
[161] given to develop fisheries. In both parts of the Island a growing population was supported from the 'seventies onwards by help of earnings derived from the seasonal herring fishing on the East Coast and from inshore line fishing at home. Women added to the Island income by seasonal 'gutting' and, in Harris, by their spinning and
[167] weaving. Money was earned by work on the mainland,

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178 and savings were sent by emigrants who remained faithful
433 to parents and home.

If it be asked why most of the people kept to their
167 Island home in spite of its poverty and earned so little
away from it, one answer must be that their native tongue
175 formed a barrier encircling them as a community at home
178 and cutting them off from the rest of the nation. Seventy-
197 five years ago the new Education Acts were not yet in
full operation. Comparing the relative well-being in the
[671] Shetlands with the extreme poverty in the Hebrides at that
[871] time, a northern agriculturist wrote that in Scotland, only
in the Hebrides "is the food obtained by the peasant
[511] occasionally so scanty" as to be unable "to maintain a
[184] labouring man in vigorous health". Inquiring why there
should be so great a difference between the Shetlanders
175 and the Hebrideans, living in similar, distant isles, he
178 wrote, "We think the answer may be given in one word—
language. . . . The population of the Hebrides cling to
197 their ancient Gaelic with consequences most disastrous to
182 themselves. . . . It handicaps them in the race for life . . . is a hindrance in the cities and a check to the emigration of both sexes to those world-wide regions where all who speak the English tongue find themselves at home."[1] He concurred with the Census Report of 1871, which stated: "The Gaelic language may be what it likes, both as to antiquity and beauty, but it decidedly stands in the way of the civilisation of the natives making use of it, and shuts them out from the paths open to their fellow-countrymen who speak the English tongue". The Report concludes: "It ought therefore to cease being taught in all our national schools. We are one people and we ought to have but one

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[1] James Mollison, in the Highland and Agricultural Society's *Report on the Present State of the Agriculture of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1878), pp. 136-38.

175 language." Many Islanders would agree with the statement
178 that Gaelic was a barrier to economic progress.
It was not only Lowland schoolmasters, ignorant of Gaelic
197 but an educated, sensible class of men in their day, who
182 used the strap on the palms of the little children "for
[511] their good" because they could not understand English.
An active Lewis country schoolmaster, who had considerable
175 rural knowledge and experience, said to me: "I know what
197 I have suffered through life from being brought up on
Gaelic. If I had my way, I would *punish* [with the strap]
871 every child I heard speaking Gaelic in the playground!"
Had the Island School Boards wished Gaelic to be consistently
taught with English, they could have prevailed.

114 One may not only disagree strongly with the means—
197 the strap—but hold that enlightened bilingual teaching is
both worth while culturally and also of assistance to
871 intelligence without interfering with use in English of the
three Rs, and of secondary and higher education. Yet in
153 Lewis recent non-verbal tests in English and Gaelic show
a mean intelligence quotient depressed by about 15 points.[1]
153 The conclusion seems to be that under the present system
197 the Gaelic school child is still at a disadvantage compared
to other school children. But even more important to the
182 child's development would seem to be the expression of
121 his response to his rural environment in his own tongue.
For this the school tests and the educational code do not
fully provide; nor do the tests of life when the adolescent
Islander suddenly finds himself at work in a Glasgow
175 factory or abroad in city streets. What concerns us here
197 is the economic drawback of a lack of ready English among

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182 [113] [1] Christina A. Smith, M.A., B.Ed., *Mental Testing of Hebridean Children in Gaelic and English.* (Scot. Council on Research in Education, vol. xxvii (London, 1948); J. L. Campbell, *Gaelic in Scotland* (2nd ed.) (Edinburgh, 1948).

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182 rural Islanders throughout the nineteenth century and even
197 today.

From 1887 the State made efforts to improve the
175 crofters' lot. Crofters' claims to stake shares upon the only
available reclaimed land in the Island, that of a few farms,
654 had been refused in the 'eighties, but came to be granted,
241 in principle and in fact, after 1900. During the war of
427 1914–18 the Government reaffirmed its promise to divide
sheep farms into crofts for men returning from the Services,
and the Land Settlement Act became law in 1919. Yet in
spite of tentative experiments and schemes, a determined
effort to see the Island possibilities and face its problems,
as a whole, still remained to be made in the twentieth
century.

175 When war broke out in 1914 over 5000 men left Lewis
to join the Services, and corresponding numbers left from
161 Harris. Others, too, served in the Merchant Marine, ex-
72 posed to U-boat warfare. From the first months of the
701 war, Lewismen in the Seaforth Highlanders, and men from
Harris in the Camerons, fought in the Highland Division
as shock troops in the attacks which cost the Division
the highest casualties of any in the British Army. The
Lovat Scouts, the Mountain Battery, the Garrison Artillery
and other units, also enrolled their men, and suffered loss.
175 The last blow to the Island came after anxiety had ceased.
Early in 1919 the transport *Iolaire* struck a rock and sank
161 at the entrance to Stornoway harbour; and 200 men who
731 had withstood dangers and hardships during four years
of war went down in the dark of a winter's night, almost
within call of their waiting relatives massed on the pier to
welcome them.

CHAPTER X

BETWEEN TWO WARS, AND AFTER: 1918–1952

(A) SEVEN YEARS' ENDEAVOUR, 1918–1925

1. *A Planner: Lord Leverhulme of the Lews*

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LOOKING back to the aftermath of unemployment following the First World War and forward to anxieties ahead, a soldier in 1944 protested that it would be exacting too great a sacrifice from the country's manhood to throw it unaided, upon " the hazards of peace ", for the second time in a generation! If Island life is to be planned for in the ensuing peace, we must ask, " What of plans last time?" Depression in the Island was not primarily due to the failure of any one of the three parties immediately concerned—to the Islanders, the crofters, cottars or fishermen, to the Scottish Office or its Departments, or to a particular philanthropist—nor even to failures by all three to get together for the Island's good. All three may deserve their share of praise or blame; who might not, stranded [114] without warning by such an ebbing tide? Behind the personal factors on which biographers and writers have insisted, in retelling Leverhulme's Island adventure, larger forces were at work, undoing the efforts of all. Further, by undermining confidence and preying upon anxiety, disaster upon an international scale brought the Island consultations from unity to feud ~~and~~ to frustration.

423 565 157 124 In May 1918 Lewis was bought by Lever of Port Sunlight, then Baron Leverhulme of Bolton-le-Moors (his birthplace), the head of a great combine with 50,000 white and 25,000 black employees. Meeting him in Lews Castle in August 1919, Dr. Hardy and I found him troubled by a human situation he had failed to diagnose. Short and stocky but very erect, quick-eyed and rapid of manner, and with a wide expressive mouth, he spoke earnestly of his plans; but his eyes flashed and his mouth set, as he rapped out, " They keep putting off, yet they leave the people in houses *not fit for Kaffirs*! " The question, " What objective inspired—or misled—Leverhulme to buy the Island? " is answered by his son and biographer.[1]

159 423 433 By 1917 Leverhulme had felt it was time to devolve his personal authority over his business, in the interests of its future. Hence he looked about him for an estate in which he could exercise " his passion for changing the face of nature ", and his eagerness for 'planning' with drawing board and T-square, and for philanthropy.[2] He nearly bought an estate in the Midlands in order to develop it; but work had already begun there, and he wished to find a place which would be his to remodel from the start. Thirty years before, Leverhulme had visited Lewis and now in 1917 he spent a week there, motoring all over the Island. " He was enraptured . . . he saw not merely a countryside in need of more and better roads, not only a residence and grounds capable of alteration and improvement, but a problem to be solved, a human and racial problem which had so far baffled all who had tried to solve it. . . . He had been told the Lewis man was lazy,

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[113] [1] Leverhulme (2nd Viscount), *Leverhulme: By His Son*, 1927, chap. xxvi, p. 221 ff. Lord Leverhulme, who had thought of styling himself 'Of the Isles' took the title 'Of the Lews'.

[2] Leverhulme (1927), cf. pp. 81-86.

159 stubborn and suspicious ; he never believed it. He realised
423 that the backwardness of the Island arose from lack of
opportunity, and that opportunity he would do his best
433 to provide. Wherever he went he found the same story
—things half attempted, nothing done." Leverhulme, one
felt in 1919, wanted to do all he could for the Islanders.
A greater man would have wanted to work not only for,
but with, the Islanders. Then, even if the fisheries had
been ruined, as they were, by forces outside his control,
he would have shared a moral victory, not shared and
suffered economic loss, with moral defeat.

174 In the Isles for centuries before, a family and well-tried
friends were valued above all other things. What was more,
183 this was still true in the lifetime both of the elder men and
[178] the women he found at home, and of the absent men, at
war. The foundation for this friendly life was a plot of
159 land and work to do, a home and the leisure to enjoy it.
433 Leverhulme, too, valued these things in his own way. He
cared for human homes and gardens, and had proved it at
461 Port Sunlight and elsewhere. A pioneer of industry and
efficiency, he pled for 'a six-hour day' and leisure afterwards, and he had done much to realise the ideal in his own works. Moreover, he was not without respect for spiritual values, freedom, and a congregation's right to choose their pastor.[1] All these things should have helped to put him into sympathy with Island life, and up to a point they did so.

159 It is clear that Leverhulme had considered the possi-
433 bilities of improving the local fisheries, village by village;
and an engineer had reported on possible harbour improve-
228 ments at Ness, Barvas, and elsewhere. But he came to the

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[1] Leverhulme (1927), p. 211; and Leverhulme (1st Baron), *The Six-Hour Day and Other Industrial Questions*, 1919.

159 conclusion—undoubtedly a sound one—that the most
433 effective action for commercial fisheries (as then known)
228 must be taken at one Island centre, Stornoway. As a
direct result he considered how to feed the growing town,
in particular how to give its children fresh milk. He saw
the farms round Broad Bay ready to be turned to high-
class dairy farms, if capitalised, and for this purpose they
were swiftly scheduled in his mind.

159 "His early days were happy ones"—wrote his son—
433 "but they were not to last for long. He encountered the
first obstacle on his path in the late summer of 1918, when
423 the Scottish Board of Agriculture declared its intention to
[647] take over the few remaining farms in the Island for crofts."
By this declaration the Board spoke for many Islesmen in
the Forces. The voices of Servicemen, not those of either
a Government or a philanthropic millionaire, counted over-
[727] whelmingly, on the Island and beyond. When the war
was over and the men came home, many set about examin-
ing their boats and fitting them up with motors, and in a
few months the evening's departure for the fishing from
Stornoway had lost some of the picturesqueness of the old,
stately procession of sail moving out to the Minch at
sunset, but had gained in efficiency as the motorised boats
went puffing out to find the shoals, sure of return without
delay after the catch was hauled in. Yet fishing was still
precarious: there might be no catch, and even if there
were, prices were a gamble. Hence many a cottar-fisher-
man wished to ensure a home for himself and applied for a
croft, with his eyes on the farms. Farms were few, and
not enough to go round more than some 10 to 15 per cent
of squatters and cottars. Still, a promise is a promise:
the farms were there, why not have them and be done with
it? Knowing this feeling in the Island, aware of its support

159 in the country, and foreseeing that the only sure way to
423 avoid irritation, friction and law-breaking was to grant
the farms and have done with it, the Secretary of State for
433 Scotland and the Board felt that they could not withdraw
the Government's promise of land. The Secretary for
Scotland, Mr. Munro (later Lord Alness), spoke with
knowledge as a Highlander. A general promise of smallholdings
had been made to all Scotsmen in the Services,
and could not easily be set aside at the wish of one man,
then approaching the age of seventy, however well-intentioned,
wealthy and in earnest. Yet Leverhulme declared
that while he would relinquish farms on the west side of
Lewis, his schemes could not go on unless he retained
the farms on Broad Bay to supply fresh milk for Stornoway.
If the farms were divided, he said, he must close the whole
scheme forthwith.

159 Of his earnestness Leverhulme left no doubt. He not
only planned but set up a retail agency, Mac Fisheries, and
423 he purchased drifters and trawlers, the Mac Line, to fish
433 far afield and bring the catch to Stornoway, there to be
228 transhipped by his own carrying service. He set about
building model dwellings in Stornoway itself, each with
its quarter-acre allotment. 'Work and Wages' from
capitalised fisheries were his offer, in further token of
which, road-making and other wage-providing work was
[178] begun. Until 1920 the farms remained undivided. The
farmers, for their part, could only wait for the expiry of
159 their leases, or for the transactions by which their leases
would be foreclosed and compensation awarded. Prices
423 of stock were high at the time, and the valuation would
433 correspond to these. Hence tenants felt they could afford
427 to wait. Meantime crofters' stock wandered over their
farms—whether because of the wilfulness of the stock or

159 of the owners—but farmers knew it was futile to protest,
473 and they suffered with a wry smile and a shrug of the
433 shoulders. After all, most of the farmers had stayed at
home and their affairs had prospered, in war-time; whereas
427 all but the older crofters had had years of seafaring or
fighting, and the nation's debt to them had not yet been
forgotten. The farmers kept quiet and waited.

159 Meantime, Leverhulme made public war upon the
Government. Speaking in Edinburgh in November 1919,
668 he declared that " Reports, thick as leaves in Vallombrosa,
433 have been the dominating feature of Government policy
in the Highlands and Isles . . . but the invariable rule
seems to have been, whenever expenditure of public money
was recommended, for the Government either to ignore
such reports or to cut down expenditure so penuriously
as only to result in waste . . . by not spending to the
full amount . . . Lewis and Harris have too long been
[2/3] the Cinderella in the Government pantomime."[1] The
crofters, reading this in the daily papers, and again in the
weekly *Stornoway Gazette* a day or two later, chuckled
with glee, rolling the phrases on their tongues. They
might not all have been able to explain the strange words,
like Vallombrosa or Cinderella, though they sounded fine;
but all had heard of pantomimes, and some might even
have seen one, without saying too much about it to the
minister. About 'penurious expenditure' they could
have no doubt. Yes, a fine speech, they felt! Yet in
spite of the sting of truth contained in such orations, these
did not make it easier for Government to co-operate with
the orator, to prevent raiding or to deal with it should it
begin.

000 Raiding did begin in the spring of 1920. Applicants

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[1] Lecture at Edin. Phil. Instn., 1920. Quoted in Leverhulme (1927).

669 for crofts in Tongue, a township north of Stornoway, took
423 the law into their own hands, seized one of the fields of
the adjacent farms, and threatened to take the remainder.
It is easy to understand that when a man has come home
from the war to his sweetheart, and after being promised
a site on which to build a home (even a black house for
a start), with a plot for potatoes, and 'a cow's grass', a
year's vain delay may breed impatience! Leverhulme
motored to the township, and with his customary vigour
and persuasiveness spoke of his plans for 'work and
wages' to be concentrated at Stornoway. He again declared
that if the farms were divided this would cripple
his schemes, and work would stop at once. The majority
there agreed to fall in with his plans; in any case, only a
159 minority could find crofts on the farms. Leverhulme felt
433 that he had carried his point. He forgot not only that
his oratory deserved applause and had won it for its own
669 sake, but that the people could not lightly afford to say
'no', if this meant immediate stoppage of wages. It was
the after-thoughts on the morrow and in the following
months, rather than agreement at the moment, that signified.
[228] In 1920 herring fetched a fair price, the herring
fishery prospects were encouraging, and work was resumed
for a time. Yet one raid having begun and "the die having
been cast, lawlessness spread rapidly". Leverhulme
stopped expenditure, and obtained an interdict against the
[423] 'raiders', though he did not prosecute. After further
parley, the Secretary for Scotland agreed to suspend
[654] division for ten years, and in 1921 Leverhulme resumed
159 operations. "Unfortunately very soon afterwards", wrote
433 his biographer, owing to "the general industrial depression
which followed the boom in trade after the war", Leverhulme
458 felt impelled to close down work for the time being,

159 and he was unable to make plans or promises for the future.
433 Meantime, it should be said, the Island herring catch and
458 prices fell rapidly (the catch by 50 per cent and prices by
[228] 60 per cent from 1920 to 1921). As a result, crofts now
seemed more precious than ever to the applicants.

159 With what Leverhulme regarded as 'almost indecent
haste', the Secretary for Scotland proceeded to fulfil the
423 promise to divide the farms. Most of the farms remaining
654 were divided into some fifty crofts, of ten acres or so with outrun, supplying little more than 10 per cent of the landless men. The Manor dairy farm, near Stornoway Castle and town, though raided by a few men, was retained to contribute to the town's supply of milk, along with two or three smaller farms close to Stornoway (Melbost, and Stoneyfield with Holm). Leverhulme felt that his offer to Lewis had been turned down, and he then concentrated his efforts upon Harris.

159 At the extreme south of Harris (midway along the
433 south-west coast), in the 'Hope' or natural harbour of
Obbe, Leverhulme built new piers. He transferred the
228 machinery of the canning factory and the kippering sheds he had commenced to build at Stornoway. He started to build houses, a number being provided on generous terms; and "at the people's wish", the settlement was renamed Leverburgh. With the transference of his energy from Lewis to Harris, Leverhulme's "optimism and determination were intensified", wrote his son. They were not to last long. After a visit to the Congo in 1925, Leverhulme died suddenly in Brussels. How far the new plans might have succeeded had Leverhulme lived, his son has commented, "remains uncertain". What is certain is that the second Lord Leverhulme toured Harris, visiting the works on hand and examining the accounts. No doubt he also

159 weighed the estimated expenditure necessary to complete
433 the unfinished projects, and their prospects of success,
comparing these with similar conditions on the East Coast
228 and at Fleetwood, and with the trend of prices. His
decision was to close the venture, and Harris was sold.
[423] The skeletons of the works were left to rust beside the
quay, while the wreck of a coal steamer was left unsalvaged,
to break up slowly upon the rocks outside, a symbol of a
lost enterprise.

2. *An All-Round Policy for Sea and Land*

185 From the 'start' in Lewis, the first Lord Leverhulme
had shown his vision and grasp as a planner. Survey preceded
plan, and decisions were swiftly put into action.
185 Why then had abandonment and failure followed? Per-
114 sonal factors have been over-stressed. 'Crofters' have
been accused of stubbornness, the Scottish Office of
procrastination and Leverhulme of impatience or obstinacy.
Stornoway shopkeepers have also been apportioned their
share of blame; and while all of them welcomed the
advent of Leverhulme as sure to bring money through the
crofters' pockets to their own tills, it is possible that, later
on, some of them did prove Devil's Advocates, having
come to fear the rise of competition by co-operative or
other large-scale concerns, should the town expand at a
[181] rapid rate. Stressing other factors of character and incompatibility,
one popular Scots author went so far as to praise
the Lewis crofter for preferring a spiritual life with poverty
on a croft, to easy work and high wages in a town. There
runs a story, well vouched for, which might seem to confirm
this. After Leverhulme had held forth upon 'work
for wages', in a township where there had been pressing

185 applications for shares in the division of a farm, but where
114 Leverhulme now felt sure of his success, an old crofter
spoke up slowly: " My Lord, what the crofter wants iss
185 *Contemplaition* ". Now, fondness for contemplation is
114 found not only among crofters as they age, but among
older fishermen all round the shores of Britain, even if it
181 mellows in the Isles especially. Yet, as Leverhulme saw
for himself, there was abundant activity among men in
their prime, as they strove to refit their boats on their
return. In 1919 hope, not contemplation, was their prevailing mood: hope for an active, fisherman's life.

With all these hopeful human factors on the side of
common effort at the start, why then did differences of
view-point come to be accentuated, not harmonised, and
' incompatibilities ' lead so soon to friction, deadlock and
159 breakdown? Surely one basic fact remains. In 1917–18,
433 when Leverhulme framed his policy and made his plans,
the Scottish fisheries, to judge from pre-war years, could
228 still expect to hold high place in providing for a brisk
[435] market in herring and white fish. True, the value of the
Island cure of white fish had fallen from £100,000 in 1900
to one-tenth, £10,000, in 1913; but Leverhulme saw that
since fresh fish were now demanded, his capitalisation of
equipment with accelerated transit of the catch should bring
quick recovery. The herring trade had been active at
Stornoway up to the eve of the war; and although the
Islanders had made leeway following the introduction of
steam and of larger motor drifters, Leverhulme thought
he saw an opportunity to capitalise the industry, providing
' work for wages '. This forecast was wrong. Consumption declined, and the market fell. Not only so; the proportion contributed by Scots fishermen to the shrinking
market declined even more.

185 In 1919, when the men came home to Lewis they could
727 still see reasons for hope. They found a strange proprietor,
known first for his outstanding—some said ruthless—
[157] business ability, and only secondly for his philanthropy.
They heard his plans and were inclined to listen.

185 Yet, remembering their pre-war losses and the notorious
fluctuations of prices and employment in the fisheries, they
wished for a policy of insurance, as it were; so, if their
home lay near a promised farm, of which they had long
159 meant to claim a share, they claimed this forthwith. Only
too soon after, in the early years of Leverhulme's adventure,
458 the fall in total sales and prices of fish brought immediate
433 loss to the keenest and hardest working of the fishermen,
228 and to their financial backers in Stornoway. These losses
warned others of the uncertainties of fishing. Now the
fall in the fishing industry is not so much as mentioned in
the biography of Leverhulme; nor do we remember a
[654] word of it in Leverhulme's speeches. One finds no data
to show a substantial endeavour by the Scottish Office to
co-operate with Leverhulme in framing policies either to
change the trend of European markets or to make local
adaptations to combat downward trends. The Fishery
Reports certainly record the losses, year by year. As for
the Island fishermen, they shared the feeling expressed
by other Scots fishermen, that the old markets across the
North Sea, eastward to what had been St. Petersburg,
could and should be reopened, not closed 'for party
reasons' by 'English politicians'. Although ostensibly
Leverhulme ignored it, he cannot really have been unaware
of the effect of the downward trend of the fisheries upon
his own prospects of success, and upon the hopes and
confidence of the fishermen. Having been so outspoken
upon the shortcomings of Government with regard to local

159 schemes, and knowing how much local fishing depended
458 upon international policy, particularly the resumption of
433 trade relations with the chief customers of the past, Lever-
hulme, one feels, should have dealt no less outspokenly
228 with these. The removal of trade barriers lay not in the
[656] hands of the Scottish Office or of Scots officials (however
internationally minded these might be as private citizens),
but in the hands of Ministers of Cabinet rank and leading
financiers, of whom Leverhulme himself was one.

In brief, the Scots fisheries suffered after the war as
458 neither Leverhulme nor others had foreseen when first
433 he laid his plans for the Island's prosperity. It seems
228 clear that had this major change been squarely faced
by Leverhulme and Government alike, in 1920, 1921 or
[423] even later, they could never have fallen apart about a
relatively minor issue, that of the farms. Both sides turned
their faces away from this disquieting factor of the Baltic
markets, though both knew it to be fundamental to the
success of Scots fisheries and the Island's future. Had they
faced it together frankly, then, even if powerless to effect
a remedy, their sincerity might have prevented a deadlock
upon a secondary matter.

159 To Leverhulme, given his large scale of expenditure
423 and return, the division of a few farms formed a minor
issue. But to a number of ex-Servicemen, 'crofters'
185 without a croft, the division meant a home and relative
433 stability. Moreover, what was merely a matter for personal
decision to Leverhulme, was a lifelong issue to many people
423 brought up in congestion on the wrong side of the boundary
[438] fence. Meantime, milk from Easter Ross was available in
Stornoway, at town if not at country prices. Lastly, further
possibilities of land-development lay open to Leverhulme,
[114] though not so readily to the unaided people. In reading

114 reports of early speeches by Leverhulme, Professor Patrick
185 Geddes had quickly come to feel that his old acquaintance,
423 Leverhulme the industrialist, might have overlooked such agricultural potentialities as existed, and that he had quite
433 overlooked the social significance of land. Hence, in May or June 1919, Geddes proposed that a survey be made by one who knew the Highlands botanically, who was experienced in agriculture, and who had some knowledge of Highlanders at home and of sociological factors. Geddes
[123] suggested Dr. M. E. Hardy for the task. Leverhulme forthwith accepted the suggestion and commissioned Hardy, whom the present writer assisted on the Island.

311 Examination of the farms, so hotly debated, showed that they possessed little or no initial superiority over neighbouring crofting settlements. That the farms were placed in the best coastal tracts for agriculture is true, but their shores are at the same time the poorest in harbours and fishing facilities. As a result, the crofters dwelling near the farms along parts of the same machars and smooth slopes were 'crofters' who sometimes fished, rather than fishermen with a house-site and a potato patch. As Hardy wrote (in his MS. Report): "The chief superiority of the farms resulted from levelling, drainage and enclosure" by landlord and farmer, sixty or seventy years before. The improved land both of farms and adjacent crofts was reclaimed from peat and machar, or from an admixture of both. "How then", asked Hardy, "did so much value
[423] come to be attached to the farms? The traditional grievance (of eviction) led neighbouring crofters to turn their eyes towards the green patches of the abandoned villages and endowed the old land with special virtues. After the Crofters' agitation of the 'eighties, successive Boards came with their eyes already focused on the farms, by the

311 cottars' claims." Thus a few of the settlements reclaimed
423 out of the common peat by some scores of people, hundreds
of years ago, long worked by joint tenants, then by subtenants,
" and later turned into modern farms, came to be
regarded as the only available land open to crofters in the
Island ".

311 Hence, Hardy concluded, it was important to tackle
some reclamation of peat or of land partially covered by
433 peat, along with the development of the main commercial
industry, fishing. The specialisation of commercial fishing
was " a wise, indeed an indispensable preliminary
step " in a constructive policy framed to deal with the
Island as a whole. One saw that the formula " All Lewismen
are fishermen " was an exaggeration, and that some
of those whose forebears had dwelt by the machars of
Broad Bay for centuries were landsmen first and seamen
185 second. Yet the specialisation planned by Leverhulme
311 would not only have given a chance to the seamen of Ness,
Eye Peninsula, Lochs and 'the Bays' of South Harris;
[433] it would also have begun to relieve congestion, giving a
croft and outrun to some of those who wished to make smallholding
their principal means of livelihood and life, and
providing a market for fresh produce on the Island itself.

Looking back, it seems clear that Hardy was right to
report to Leverhulme (in 1919) that, while the great fishery
scheme was indispensable, it should be complemented by a
scheme for occupation on the land for those who wished it.
The major problem of land being the amelioration of peat,
continued Hardy, it should be tackled with twentieth-century
knowledge and equipment. Slopes were to be
found, favourable to reclamation, where peat had been
thinned by cutting, where it was shallow from good drainage,
[433] or lighter in texture from admixture with sand. Had

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185 311 433 159 Leverhulme grasped the problem in this fresh way, complementing his first policy of the sea for the seamen by one of the land for the landsmen, he could cheerfully have allowed the Government to honour their promise to divide the farms, and thus he would have brought peace to all. In giving up the farms he would merely have had to reconcile himself to additional imports of fresh milk from Easter Ross, at an extra cost of a penny or two per pint. To do Leverhulme justice, experiments on peat were begun (about 1920) upon a small scale, partly, it is understood, as a result of Hardy's report. Yet in failing to make this reclamation an integral part of his plans, in refusing to adapt himself to promises given and to agree to the wishes of many applicants, Leverhulme of the Lews allowed peace to be wrecked. Why he should have stopped work in Lewis in order to remove to Harris, is not clear. There is nothing to show that crofter-fishermen in the creeks of Lochs and other fishing tracts of Lewis believed less firmly in fishing than their fellows in 'the Bays' of South Harris.[1] Nor was there extensive land for dairying in Harris. To make a second attempt to found a centre, involving fresh expense, at Obbe (on the exposed south-west coast), a much less favourable point on the Island than Stornoway, was to court disaster, not to pilot his way through the difficulties of falling markets to success.

185 311 (114) Leverhulme, it is true, had seen one side of the 'all-round' policy required: the need for a plot of land for the Lewis fisherman and his family. In Hardy's words, "A man's choice of the sea should not prevent his having 'a

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[828] [829] [1] In his father's biography, the second Viscount suggests that there was a difference of character between the (unreasonable) men of Lewis and the (reasonable) men of Harris. The assertion is unsupported by the facts. There were raids in Harris, too, comparable to any in similar tracts of Lewis, but in neither were they important.

185 corner he can call his own ', a kailyard or garden. His 311 womenfolk might wish to keep poultry, and even a cow. [114] More than this . . . might tend to make the old amphibious life begin over again." Where Hardy went further was to see the need for a complementary policy; the development of crofting into skilled small-holding. " Similarly," he went on, " the development of small-holding, by one who chose the land for a career, should not prevent his spending a leisure hour fishing from the shore, or in a neighbour's boat, for haddock, saithe, or flounders for the morrow's dinner. Yet the wish and need for a higher standard of living involved new emphasis on one chosen vocation, and a greater division of labour than heretofore," 311 whether on land or sea. Some division of callings already existed, be it remembered. Manifestly, in the virtual absence of arable land for them, about 1500 cottar and squatter families had perforce to depend mainly on other occupations than the land. These families included the keenest, most successful, and potentially prosperous fishermen, like those of 'congested' Scalpay (off Tarbert, Harris). The useful "Remarks" formerly published along with the "Creek Statistics" of the Fishery Board, repeatedly contrasted the townships and creeks mainly concerned in crofting with those mainly occupied in fishing. The contrast is to be found from the Shetlands round to (159) Barra or Kintyre. Leverhulme, seeing a future in the [433] fisheries, tried to give the almost landless seamen their chance at sea. Had he accepted the complementary policy of giving a number of the now boatless crofters a better craft and means to improve the outrun, his schemes would have been complete.

114 It is a misfortune that Leverhulme's one-sided policy 159 had already hardened in his mind when Hardy (and the

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159 present writer) came to the Island in August 1919, and still
433 more by November 1919 when Hardy's Report had been
completed. Leverhulme had begun to fight for his plan,
[114] rather than use it in a supple way. Yet there was still a
chance to put things right had the concept of a balanced
[185] community been clearly visualised by Government and
people, by working fishers and crofters and the educated.
Had an active 'Lewis Association' existed at that time, it
might have turned the scales.[1]

Lastly, during the war and after it, Leverhulme had
said, again and again, that it was his admiration of the
people which had called him to the Lews. By means of
this 'all-round' plan, the very root of Island character
185 could have been renewed, namely, communal life. It was
311 with their communal life in mind that Hardy—in spite of
his horror of bad husbandry and of the physical dirt of
114 the byre and black house—wrote, first, that "rural re-

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114 [1] Quotations from the MS. Report having been published (apparently without permission, and with somewhat misleading criticisms), reference should be made to these to illustrate the need for survey and collaboration with Leverhulme in the first three years of his proprietorship, and the importance of survey for action today. In 1919 Mr. W. C. Mackenzie (to whose historical researches lovers of Lewis owe so much) had published his belief that "Under the new proprietorship . . . the results [of development] will be at once fruitful and far-reaching", without his making any constructive comment. By 1932 he wrote very differently, criticising Leverhulme's policy and also Hardy's (qualified) approval. At that later time, Mr. Mackenzie would have it that 'the Lewisman' was a crofter and fisherman in one, and that for him to become 'mainly a fisherman' or 'mainly a crofter' (in Hardy's words) would be false to his character and tradition. Now, historically, the element of regional specialisation is ancient in the Island; the crofter-*fishers* of Lochs, Uig or 'the Bays' of Harris have long been rather different from the fisher-*crofters* of Barvas, or of Coll and Gress. Specialisation was strongly marked by 1914-19; it still is. Further, Hardy (and the present writer) had not pled for complete divorce of the two vocations of sea and land. We urged that crofting be given its chance as well as fishing; and that the two callings should be complementary. Allowance being made for a quarter of a century of changes, the facts and the need remain. Cf. W. C. Mackenzie, 1919 (p. 187) and 1932, for the quotations given.

185 construction of the Island must rest upon the improvement
311 of the land": and secondly, that by this means "it was
imperative to revive the traditional community spirit, the
114 essential feature of Hebridean civilisation". Those words
still hold good. Yet the land itself is too barren and the
soil too poor to provide a living for many by export of
438 fresh agricultural produce to the mainland. Only a local
market could pay a fair price for most of the products of
159 intensive small-holding. Judging from the free, untrammelled
433 trade before 1914, Leverhulme held that fishing
could be set upon a commercial basis in the Isles; and
228 there could be few better judges of commercial possibilities
438 than this keen industrial thinker and organiser. If he was
right, as surely he was, to begin with, then the local market
to be created, or rather enlarged by growth of population
and prosperity at Stornoway, could have purchased the
fresh milk and eggs, the fresh greens and fruit, raised on
enlarged small-holdings and marketed co-operatively.

181 A final comment remains to be made. The community
spirit of Scots fishers from Berwickshire to Barra has gone
476 far to make co-operation among the men of the crews a
living thing. 'Work for Wages' offered little outlet for
this, indeed it virtually suppressed it; and 'co-partnership'
on the Port Sunlight model was a very different
matter from the co-partnership of a crew. Even if at that
time it had been proved impossible to organise free co-operation
in fishing, co-operation in small-holding townships
might have kept the communal spirit alive, for later
renewal at sea.

114 It is not easy to assess the after-effects of Leverhulme's
433 activity. Leverhulme certainly helped hundreds of families
by the provision of wages for the building or rebuilding
of roads and other works, of which some were completed

114 433 and are of lasting advantage. Yet his projects were conceived impersonally, apart from the people, and to be valued in terms of money alone. Was it to be wondered that more permanent values were liable to be overlooked? 181 Immediate payment and the prospect of further wages rather than a home to build and a boat to adapt, suggested immediate pleasure, for example. The unsettling influences of War, and the natural wish for a big spree after four years of it, led to some squandering of money; and there was heavy drinking at Stornoway by fishers there and from round about. In the end, when payments ceased, the prospects of the crofters and fishers were as barren as ever. Above all, the somewhat conservative though sensible outlook of the people having already been disturbed by the impact of War, their sense of values was further shaken by seeing the control of immense capital resources in the hands of one man, whose efforts seemed, by comparison, to dwarf their own independent struggles and group co-operation. Of definitely spiritual values little was heard, for 'enlightened self-interest' was Leverhulme's declared motive in life. Remembering this, there are men and women of insight in Lewis today to whose judgment a lifetime's disinterested work with the people gives some authority, who believe that in the end Leverhulme's incursion brought 114 433 little lasting good. Leverhulme certainly showed how to plan boldly and on a great scale. He drove straight for a vital issue, but in an ill-balanced way. The result raises a 000 major question. Can balanced planning be achieved by one man whose personal fortune and pride are at stake, in opposition to a free community, and in face of an international situation of which the prime social issues oppose his desires and declared principles of 'enlightened self-interest'?

BETWEEN TWO WARS, AND AFTER

(B) SLOW CHANGE: 1925-39

1. *The Land, the Sea, and the Loom*

423 When Leverhulme parted company with the people of
Lews his gesture of farewell was one of generosity: the
632 offer of Lewis to its people. The Stornoway Trust ^ was
431 formed, and this accepted the gift of the adjacent crofting
[623] townships of the Parish, and of the Castle and its beautiful
Park or 'policies'. In crofting townships, however, the
people declined the offered gift of land, finding that they
could not afford the augmentation of rates entailed by
acceptance. So the remainder of the estate was offered
for sale in several lots, which were bought by individuals
423 and have proved safe investments. The letting of sporting
rights adds a further, albeit a variable, return of income to
632 that of the rents received. It is indeed anomalous that a
427 crofting estate, such as a Lewis parish, can yield a good
431 return to a purchaser, yet that the crofter-occupiers themselves
would lose by receiving it as a gift.[1] Much-needed
829 improvements in housing would also be discouraged, for
fear of increase in their rates. It is true that if (under
existing laws of assessment) all the farmers and crofters,
cottars and squatters of a county were to become owners
at the same moment, the total increase in assessments would
either be repaid in greater services or met by lowered rates

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[1] The reasons (as indicated in Chapter IX (E)) are briefly that a crofter (or 'small landholder'), as occupier of an agricultural holding, can only be assessed at three-eighths of the occupier's half of the assessment on his Fair Rent, *i.e.* at less than a quarter of the whole rental. Although he may have built a good house and other buildings he is not assessed at their full value; neither is his landlord. Were he to become owner he would then be liable to assessment both as occupier and as owner, on the full annual value of land and of buildings too; with deduction of five-eighths on the agricultural value as occupier only.

^ [see pp. 320-323.. analysis]

423 —or by a compromise between. But as it is, if one crofter,
431 or a small group of crofters like those of a township or
427 parish of Lewis, were to become owner-occupiers (even by
gift), they would be penalised as compared to others.
632 Hence the Lewismen preferred to go on paying rent as
829 statutory crofting tenants. Leverhulme sold the land and
received the price; the new owners paid for it and received
an investment; and the only 'loser' on this curious
transaction was the Local Authority, the County, which
failed to make more in rates!

[623] Further reasons why the great majority of crofters declined Leverhulme's offer have been given by the Lewis Association's Economic Committee (1944):

(a) As individual proprietors, they would lose the advantages of the jurisdiction of the Scottish Land Court in dealing with their disputes, and any litigation would take a more costly form.

(b) They would be debarred from obtaining loans from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland for the improvement of their holdings or houses; as the Department would no longer have the "Corner Stone" of a landlord to fall back upon in the event of renunciation.

(c) The crofters were afraid that as individual proprietors they would forfeit their share of the Common Grazing rights.

(d) Should they wish to quit their holdings they would be compelled to find a buyer in the open market, instead of renouncing to their landlords and getting valuation.

(e) There is a feeling among Lewis crofters that they prefer to have a landlord before whom they can lay their difficulties and disputes, and who will attend to their wants; an authority that relieves them of responsibility.

[181] As the historical evidence has shown, a lack of responsi-
[624] bility has been greatly due to the undermining and then the
[175] abolition of the authority of the township's own elected
Constable.

623 The Trustees of the Stornoway Trust have not found
423 it easy to meet the cost of keeping up the valuable property
427 of the Castle and Park, nor to carry the burden of its rates,
no adequate income being available for the purpose.
178 Today, however, Leverhulme's gift is being put to good
874 use as a Technical College, opened in September 1952.

311 Division of the available farms, after providing about
200 small crofts (of ten acres or so), still left the problem
427 of finding legal homes on legal tenure for the remaining
cottars and squatters.[1] The Department of Agriculture
362 arranged to feu plots of 'skinned land' on the outrun of
656 certain townships, including one in the extreme north and
others in Lochs. About 200 of these little holdings with potato ground were provided. On the holders' behalf the Department feued land from the owner, after obtaining the consent of the Common Grazings Committee of the township and permission from the Land Court for 'resumption', *i.e.* for enclosure of a portion of the common. The legal and administrative procedure involved may seem disproportionate to the economic value of the holdings. Yet difficulties of law and custom had been allowed to go from bad to worse during the past eighty years; and these difficulties were overcome.

362 To encourage better housing in the crofting counties,
652 loans are made to 'crofters and fishermen feuars' person-
ally. Local stone, or latterly concrete, is used, and much
[342] of the building is done by the 'man of the house' himself,
and his friends. From 1920 to 1940, nearly 1200 loans were made in Lewis and Harris for the erection (or improvement) of houses, and in a few cases for the erection

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[162] [1] Estimated at 1200 to 1500 shortly before, the open question was whether subdivision during the previous eighty years was to be recognised and accepted.

362 of new steadings. The average amount of loans (totalling
652 £166,000) was under £150; repayment has been satis-
factory, and the arrangements made by the Department
of Agriculture won general praise among the people. Yet
1200 houses were very far from replacing all the 'black
houses', and many more are needed.

433 In terms of cash profit, ten crofters today run their
crofts less remuneratively than the farmer they dispos-
427 sessed; even together they may show little more total
241 production than the farmer. Nevertheless, these ten crofts
each allow a part, at least, of the basis for a country home.
[423] Hence the weight of public opinion supported, nay, insisted
on 'giving back' the land to the descendants of those who
654 had worked it sixty or a hundred years before. The State
423 bought the farm stock at a high valuation, and till lately
without adequate reform of crofting use and wont. The
farms having now been divided, a great emotional issue,
which had smouldered for half a century, has been brought
to an end. Although the practical results are small, the
crofters feel that justice has been done, and that fact may
311 be a great gain. Now that there is no more green reclaimed
land to be had, the reclamation of the peat moor, or the
grey 'skinned' boulder clay has to be faced.

By financing the renewal of Leverhulme's brief attempt
to reclaim deep peat on Arnish Moor, south of Stornoway,
the Canadian, T. B. Macaulay, made a resolute attempt to
[241] solve the island's main agricultural problem. Good crops
were grown, potatoes and silage produced, and a dairy farm
established. But the difficulties called for continuity of
effort and research. From the practical point of view of
'demonstration' it had been a mistake to tackle deep and
almost level peat, black in colour and viscous in consistency.
[407] There was not the light machinery required for cultivation.

311 And when laid down in permanent grass for the dairy herd, the land became water-logged in wet weather. The war called a halt to progress; and though much was learned, the farm was not a demonstration of success. Smaller experiments were made, with some success, in improving 'skinned' land. For both types of land, the cost of fertilisers, even more than of labour, was the chief economic difficulty.[1]

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423 A difficulty which aggravates 'congestion' in crofting townships is that even a small croft may consist of several plots. This was only too well illustrated, as late as 1935, by the dilemma in which a crofter found himself, in a township north of Stornoway. This crofter's land was in at least five separate strips, mixed up with the land of four neighbours. The township and the plan of the holding are known to me. As the crofter complained, he could not walk round his present cottage, nor bring building materials for a new house to the site, without trespassing. He could not even put up scaffolding because the stays at each end would project on to the holdings of his neighbours, who objected. The Land Court has power to re-allocate the land in self-contained holdings. This crofter had twice asked for this to be done, but on each occasion neighbours opposed the application, and it was not granted. As he could not replace his present house by a modern one, he applied to the Stornoway Estate Trustees for another croft in a neighbouring township. When the Trustees saw a plan of the holding they described it as a jig-saw puzzle; but having no holding to offer him elsewhere, they could only ask the Factor to try to make an amicable arrangement with the man's neighbours. This case is extreme; yet it

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[1] W. G. Ogg and Angus Macleod, *Scottish Journal of Agriculture*, 1930–36.

311
241 illustrates the narrow margin of habitability on these fragmented holdings.

423 Now, in Lewis periodic pooling and exchange, or the
practice of *movable* run-rig on the small joint-tenants'
241 farms, was abolished early in the nineteenth century, except
423 upon the machar, where it still continues. Apparently the
476 strips were simply fixed where they had last been apportioned by lot. Subdivision of the little crofts among sons
178 and grandsons followed, owing to inheritance without re-
[175] clamation. Fairness gave 'the patchwork quilt' described; but it was fairness pushed to the point of folly, for differences in soil from one adjacent strip to another were slight! It is otherwise with the long, narrow plough-strips which run from the houses on the pure boulder clay down to the sandy shore: run-rig, movable or fixed, is understandable and necessary there. The case just cited shows how a sensible communal tradition, such as that of '*movable* run-rig' with periodic pooling, may degenerate into absurdity by fixation. Happily the machar still shows the sane maintenance of a tradition, the pooling of resources:[1]

182 In 1924–25, widespread distress in the Isles, the failure
161 of the Leverhulme endeavour, the crofters' refusal to own
their own crofts, and the emigration which followed, caused
many outsiders to forecast rapid depopulation. It was all
182 the more interesting to note the confidence in the Island's
161 future shown by buyers of the great estate, all of whom
471 knew what they were about, for they were men with
experience of the Island, of its rates and rentals and of its
people. To a wealthy man who repurchased a sporting

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[113] [1] Apportionment of lands held in run-rig in the Carloway estate is described, and the principle discussed, in *Scottish Land Court Reports*. (See *Scottish Law Rev.* vol. 28, 7; July 1940, pp. 51-54.) At the same time 'mechanisation', or the co-operative utilisation of tractors had led to pleas for 'collective farming'. (*Stornoway Gazette*, February 1944.)

182 estate, or where a single lodge was bought as a home for
161 retirement, depopulation might not matter. Certain populated
471 parishes, however, were bought as investments by
men of comparatively modest means. The principal
471 reasons for his purchase given to me by a retired man,
124 formerly connected with the administration of the Lews
estate, were two. Asked if he had found, and expected,
steady, remunerative payment of rent, he replied: "Certainly!"
Next, in view of Press forecasts of general
emigration, I referred to the fact that if large numbers
of crofters decided to give a year's legal notice of departure
and apply for compensation for improvements, including
the erection of a 'white house' (otherwise than by Government
aid), the landowner would be faced by heavy liabilities
while deprived of income. Had the purchaser no
fear of such an eventuality? "Certainly not!" was the
reply, "the crofters will stick to their homes for many a
long year."

829 These examples show that, while the defeat, or non-realisation
of Leverhulme's schemes, seemed to many outsiders
458 the beginning of a not distant 'end' to the Island
community, the Islanders themselves did not contemplate
a final exodus. They were quite uncertain what was to
come, it is true. Who was not, in those years of discouragement
for Scotland and her people, for Wales, for
Tyneside and Lancashire? The years of Leverhulme's departure
from Lewis and of his death brought bad seasons.
In 1924 storms destroyed crops and the peat would not dry.
Herring catches and prices, though they had risen a little
since 1921-22, had not allowed recovery from the losses
sustained. The cessation of Leverhulme's wage-payments
meant a gap in income which the Islanders could not fill
[135] at home. To relieve poverty in 1924-25, a Highlands and

829 Islands Distress Fund was raised in the Lowlands. The
458 Committee organising it distributed relief, and purchased
[735] seed potatoes, etc. They also drew attention to some
important features of Island conditions. Among others was
735 that of the scale of charges for transport of goods and
passengers. These charges had risen by from two to
505 four times what they had been.[1] The steerage passengers
were poorly provided for; and a later improvement in cabin comfort was not accompanied by improved steerage accommodation. One remembers in particular the suffering of the 'fisher girls'. In good weather the passage home (by day) was bearable; and though the song that 'lifted' as the boat left Kyle for the last lap to Stornoway sank pathetically as the steamboat left the shelter of Skye, voices began to rise again in the shelter of Stornoway Bay, sounding clear as the boat drew in. In bad weather the crowded women suffered sorely. Five hundred might be packed on the deck with little or no shelter, or covered the benches and floor of the steerage, sick and
[829] distraught. The Committee pointed out that " the Government increasingly accepted responsibility for the roads of the kingdom ", and that sea communications were even more vital than roads to Islanders, for they serve in place of both road and rail. Some action was taken, but charges remained high.

167 As a result of all these difficulties, many young men

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[1] Examples were given of the rise in charges from 1914 to 1924, *e.g.* a web of tweed, Harris to Glasgow, from 1s. to 3s.; a box of lobsters, Harris to London, 4s. 6d. to 11s.; a barrel of herring, Stornoway to Kyle, 1s. to 3s. and so on. Although the rise on larger consignments was less, these were of no benefit to 'small folk'. Typical charges for the export of livestock were: (Lochmaddy, N. Uist, to Oban, or from Harris) for sheep the rise was from 9d. to 2s.; for lambs, 6d. to 2s.; for horses or cows, 5s. to 18s.; for stirks, 2s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The Committee's report was privately printed.

167 left the Island. Yet after 1931 many returned, owing to
losses and unemployment both in British towns and over-
[288] seas. When emigrants began to come home the 'Harris'
[178] tweed industry had spread to Lewis and offered increasing
employment. Some men still fished in family-owned
[464] Island boats, and others as paid hands (on boats from
[226] the East Coast), though losses and unemployment were
suffered.

178 Inter-war changes were hastened not only by movement
177 beyond the Island—an influence at work for three or four
generations before—but by mobility within it. In 1919 a
493 small mail car made its way daily from Stornoway along
[205] each of the five main roads, with an occasional passenger.
When crofters crossed the Island to Stornoway they went on foot or took the pony and cart at a slow walk: it was a day's journey. Ten years later, Ford vans, bought second-hand, ran daily to Stornoway from every township. Frequency, ease and relative cheapness of movement came late in an Island with no railway: the mobility of the motor for marketing and shopping brought rapid change.

178 'Hand-loom' weaving had become an important, if
286 precarious, resource, important because of the capital
invested and the labour employed, yet precarious because
[433] of its dependence upon name and sentiment, not only
[462] upon intrinsic value. In Harris many women had spun
and woven for sale for over a generation before 1914, mostly weaving pure hand-spun yarn, and they continued to do so. For many years before 1914, an occasional weaver was to be found in villages in Lewis too, generally weaving a handspun weft upon a mill-spun warp. By 1939 it was estimated that there were about 1200 looms in the Island, chiefly weaving mill-spunyarn, most of it spun in the two principal Stornoway mills. A carding mill

178 exists at Tarbert and another was erected in 'the Bays'
286 district by Leverhulme. Leverhulme also appears to
have introduced 'Automatic' hand-looms into Lewis.
[423] Today as in the past, the weavers possess a little croft or
[422] a feu, a cow, and a few sheep on the outrun, and perhaps
a small boat.

121 Commercial fishing and weaving cannot, however, be
satisfactorily combined, for seasonal alternation of occupa-
286 tion entails waste of gear and plant, and interferes with
228 efficiency. Thus in the North Lochs fishing 'creek'
(Leurbost neighbourhood, immediately south of Storno-
182 way), weaving became important, but none of the seven
178 large herring fishing boats (still registered in 1930) had
been fitted with motors after 1918; they were idle and
[501] rotting, and by 1938 only one was still registered. In South
Lochs, however, motor-boats were purchased, but there
is little weaving. An obvious reason for the difference is
the accessibility of the North Lochs area by road to
[493] Stornoway. Light passenger cars bring yarn to the village,
besides groceries, etc., and take away rolls of tweed. South
Lochs, on the other hand, considerably further from
Stornoway by road, is still within reach for marketing fish.
In North Lochs, merchant seamen at home and young men
on their return from three months' work on East Coast
fishing boats, turned increasingly to the 'Automatic' looms,
manipulation being easily learnt; but such intermittent
work alone gives little hope of progress. There is no more
fascinating problem than the future of improved weaving.

2. *Unemployment and the Island Budget*

174 In the past, the storms of the Atlantic washed up on
731 the Island shores the wreckage of world commerce; and
434

731 fragments of spars and other needful things lacking on
croft and moor were picked up and carefully allotted.
434 So, after 1919, from the wreckage of modern industry
458 borne on the ground-swell of 'Depressions', there came
to the Islesfolk the frail raft of unemployment relief, doled
out like driftwood long ago.

458 Some assessment is therefore required. The total
amounts of relief disbursed before 1931 were comparatively
746 bountiful; and they certainly exceeded the sum of
[745] the crofters' contributions to the Unemployment Insurance
Fund. After a couple of months of wage labour at road-mending,
harbour-repair, or the like, young men were
qualified for 'the dole'. Furnished with this, they returned
to the croft when paid employment gave out, to
cart in their peat, collect stones for a new house or saunter
out with a rod for a little fishing from the rocks. All this
was done 'on the dole', with complete legality, so long as
their names were duly inscribed at Stornoway Labour
Exchange as seeking fresh employment. Not a few prayed
that 'employment' would not come inconveniently soon,
as they would then be legally bound to accept it and to
leave the croft. No doubt, even if only a part of the money
received was urgently needed, the surplus was not squandered,
as it might have been in a town. Extra cash, if any,
served to buy a loom here, fencing for the garden there,
and other things of permanent use. Yet morally it constituted
misappropriation of relief. As a result, through no
real fault of their own, young men began to lose independence
[361] and self-respect. This general problem for youth
was widespread in years of 'depression', and it was
[184] peculiarly severe both in industrial Clydeside and the
fishing villages of Scotland, and also throughout the
'depressed areas' of northern and western Britain, of
which the Isles form the outermost fringe.

458
746 which the Isles form the outermost fringe. Particular aspects of the Island's problem were its own.

The application of 'the Means Test' was therefore to the good in the Isles to begin with, whatever was to be said for or against it in towns. Many honest crofters thought the test should have been much more rigidly applied in the [162] Islands. In 1932, after the worst of the depression had passed, there were in Lewis (proper) some 750 registered unemployed men (with only 5 boys), of whom 250 were seamen from the Merchant Service; and the other 500 included dockers and casual labourers of various sorts, many of whom had returned from the cities. The seamen, to take the largest class, constituted one for which relief was thoroughly justified; unemployment benefit was paid to each man until he had been unemployed for over six months. The Public Assistance Committee then gave 'Transitional Payment' after applying the Means Test, in which they took the produce of the croft into consideration. Public Assistance might follow later. Out of 250 cases, soon after the Means Test was applied, there was none in which the Committee assessed the need as equal to the benefit formerly received. In the Lowlands, on the other hand, the real need was usually found to be greater than the 'benefit' paid, and therefore relief could not in fairness be reduced.

There were years when work at sea was not to be had. As one left the Firth of Clyde, by the railroad to the Isles, one could count sometimes a dozen, sometimes a score of good 'tramp' steamers dossed in the Gareloch; and one thought of their crews, good men, but idle and rusting too. At such a time reduced payment to Island seamen with a croft, in place of total payment to town-dwelling seamen without one, effected a saving to the public purse. The

458 problem remains that Island seamen may thus continue
746 indefinitely to be crofters receiving partial relief, seamen
only in name. Without doubt, part-time work on a croft
is socially a lesser evil than prolonged unemployment in
a slum or semi-slum. The crofter's family, too, is relatively
better reared than that of many a poor seaman in Glasgow,
Liverpool or Cardiff. Yet if this were all, it would be no
adequate life for a man, while continuing to be an expense
[461] to the State. The more satisfactory side of such relief is
that the Islanders, when unemployed, turn to building
[311] new 'white houses', and either to making small improvements on their crofts, or as in Ness (a progressive village
with a high proportion of seamen), to the reclamation of
new holdings on 'skinned land'. In all such cases a
means test provides against full payment to those who
could do without.

458 To women normally employed in 'gutting', unemployment relief is given only at such time as there is no
746 work during the season when it might be expected, *i.e.*
462 from May or June to December. Gutters from the Island
are busiest for the months from June to August on the
[228] West and East Coast of Scotland, and again for two months,
from October to November, in East Anglia. The number
of Lewis women normally employed was over 1500 in a
typical season (1930), the earnings averaging £19 each for
the summer fishing in Stornoway, and as much again for
the gutting in East Anglia. But the demand fell, and by
1932, for instance, some 250 women were obtaining relief,
through Stornoway, in early August, the number doubling
during the slack months from mid-August.

181 The tragedy and the danger of any means test are that
458 in effect it asks, not "How prosperous can you become
if given help?" but "How poor can you become to qualify
746

181 for help?" In one of the Outer Isles, I know of one or
458 two crofters holding fifteen acres of arable, with a share of
a good outrun, who have let their stock dwindle and
746 deteriorate, and their crofts lie mostly fallow, though these
could support a horse or two, several cows, and fifty sheep.
After having found some casual labour, they discovered
they could live mostly idle 'on the dole'. Self-respecting
neighbours suffer: good families who prefer to be independent of 'Assistance' and to improve their croft
[476] and stock, and the outrun too. These find their stock
deteriorating for lack of co-operation in breeding, fencing,
and other communal duties, and see their crops invaded
by weeds, blown from a lazy neighbour's plot. While
an idle neighbour benefits by their industry, they themselves are losers.

In another island, a hard-working crofter lost a score
of good lambs through 'worrying' by the dogs of an idle
neighbour, whose own stock had dwindled to a trifle. He
was finally awarded legal compensation; but he found it
wiser not to exact it, for the unspoken threat of exaction
[476] gave him a hold upon the idle 'dole-drawer'. The worker
could still insist that the idler pay his share of the cost of
[626] posts and wire for a fence on the outrun, or contribute
the minimum hours of labour due for fencing and other
[461] statutory tasks in the township. Men like that idler sap
the urge to work. They lower communal morality to a
181 semblance of the social code once too commonly seen by
Islanders in the domestic service of the upper and middle
classes, a code by which chronic idleness was disguised as
'leisure' and conspicuous dependence upon the work of
others was honoured as 'independent means'.[1]

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[1] A summary of production, and figures of productive and non-productive income, are given in Appendix I.

(c) THE OUTLOOK: 1939–54 AND SINCE

458 How then can the situation be assessed, as it was before
178 the outbreak of war and since then? By 1939 twenty years
had been partly lost; for the after-war years of the 'Leverhulme
boom' were followed by discouragement and
poverty. During that time one might have hoped for half
[423] a generation of reconstruction and progress. On the other
hand the sore question of dividing the farms was settled,
so bringing raiding to an end. Congestion on the existing
crofts is less than it was, owing to this fact, and to the
[166] provision of feus. The poverty of many breadwinners
who had migrated to the cities first cut down the amounts
remitted to their Island dependents, then drove them home.
[433] A croft, or even a garden site, and the opportunity of
building a good house there made life still worth while,
[746] when other employment had failed. Unemployment
relief, though tempting some to idleness, gave a respite
[286] which many utilised to make a fresh start. As fishing
waned, many had taken advantage of the easy beginning
[226] offered to learn a new trade—weaving. This has made
many feel that the living to be found on the Island is
better than alternation of 'wage-earning' with unemployment,
in Glasgow or abroad. They believe the situation
[311] of the Island community to be hopeful. While the land
remains little better than before, many, even of the younger
people, still care for the Island life among their own kin.
Given a clear lead, these could reorganise themselves, and
undertake the developments needed in fishing, weaving
and reclamation. The homes are sound, 'good neighbourhood'
endures, and given fresh opportunity, the
community could awaken to new life.

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44
476 During and since the war, co-operative marketing was

178 developed through the township Grazing Committees by
476 the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society and its
44 associated Crofters' Agency. Lime and fertilisers were
[654] purchased, and wool and other products sold, co-operatively.
The co-operative marketing of lobsters, taking
[228] advantage of fluctuating London prices, has led to the
reconstruction of ponds for storage. By these and other
[654] means, government assistance is utilised but not squandered;
earlier initiative in agricultural organisation is
reinforced; and communal tradition is revived, linked
to personal responsibility through the crofters' lifelong
knowledge of one another.

178 As to the future, all agreed that unless the Harris Tweed
288 industry flourished, with work at reasonable wages, the
villages would be abandoned by the young, perhaps with
[829] no return such as hitherto on 'retirement'. Many young
people are content with life in the townships, provided
they can get a living there, though not all, for they are
somewhat divided; and work elsewhere, even in the mills
of Stornoway, is a counter-attraction.

178 Social life is undergoing changes which operate both
592 for and against the retention of the young. On one hand,
538 household interchange of conversation, song and story,
the *ceilidh*, has declined. On the other hand, one found
178 that, as regards religious prohibitions, and in spite of the
nervous tension expressed in 'Revivals', the young have
771 won greater freedom. Near one village a Nissen hut,
577 handed over to the Home Guard, was also used by young
[535] people for monthly dances. When I asked a young crofter
invalided from the Navy whether the Elders of the Kirk
made no protest, he replied that they had, but had to give
it up: "They see that we won't stand for it"! This
would have been unthinkable during the First World War,

178 or after it. After 1914–18, the Rector of the Nicolson
771 Institute, Stornoway, proposed village halls for village
577 education and recreation.[1] The scheme was never fully
realised except in one township, Sandwick, near Storno-
[346] way, owing to the strength of puritanical opposition. In
[345] particular, dancing by young folk was condemned as
[181] "dancing upon the graves of their brothers". This atti-
tude is breaking down; social standards, in becoming less
[535] repressive, may encourage young people to stay.

178 Broadcasting—a factor of change everywhere—came to
the townships as a revolution. Newspapers had already
207 filtered in; but for the first time the Gaelic-speaking
[204] home was entered and dominated by an English-speaking
voice. It has made itself heard there almost ceaselessly
ever since—in broadcast talks, discussions, announcements
178 of news, entertainment, singing and prayers. Only the
207 Sabbath imposes general silence. In the Scottish Home
Service great trouble has been taken to meet all tastes at
795 the highest level for each, from 'low-brow' to 'high-
brow' and from Clydeside to the Isles. To a thoughtful,
selective Island listener the new opportunity for imaginative
human contacts and for initiation of all kinds is immense.
And the purely Gaelic listener is not forgotten. He wel-
comes Gaelic song or story; and worship in Gaelic has
reached many an elderly person's bedside.

178 Yet few listeners select: much broadcasting is designed
207 for those whose only picture-galleries are advertisement
hoardings and whose only drama and music are to be found
[525] at "the Pictures". And through no fault of the B.B.C.,
the Sports News offers temptations for those in poverty to
acquire wealth innocently through luck in a football pool,

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[1] W. J. Gibson, "Social Amenities in the Western Isles", *Sociological Rev.* (Jan. 1932).

178 so creating a small leak in the purse and in the mind,
207 leaving both a little emptier, week by week. Surveys made
by teacher-members of the Educational Institute of Scotland
[525] describe the effects on listeners in Highland parishes
[829] as pernicious, in the main. The reports of the B.B.C., on
the other hand, emphasise their cultural endeavours, and
the lightening of house-work and of rural monotony or
solitude. Every effort is needed to aid a happy selection
in home and neighbourhood.

72 Experiences undergone in war were of very differing
701 types. Many men spent the war years in the Navy, without
contact with decent town life, or others in the Merchant
Marine. Of combatants in the land forces, the Territorials
of the original 51st Highland Division experienced a few
months of relative inactivity in France, then of a brief but
bitter campaign, followed by long years in prison camps,
while other soldiers underwent prolonged training in Britain,
followed by severe fighting for long periods, far afield.
Lastly, a limited number of men served in engineering or
other works of war-time industry, though labouring work,
at high wages, kept many of the older men employed at
[462] home. Of the women called up for service, some were
posted to the Forces, some to the Land Army, and some were
[162] sent to factories. The greater opportunities for women to
earn a living wage away from the Island tend to equalise
the ratio of the sexes.

177 An experience new to the Western Isles came with the
establishment of Air Bases. Not only did their construction
[464] provide high wages for labouring for the older resident
crofters, brought daily to the Bases by bus from their
townships, but for the first time a heterogeneous mass of
men from every part of urban Britain was put down at
the doors of these quiet communities—at a time when

177 most of the young men of the Islands were away. Hitherto,
[464] though people from the Isles had gone out into the world and rubbed shoulders with all sorts of men and women, from best to worst, their own homes and townships had remained inviolate. Now, however, there came men in numbers from distant homes, with little to do when off duty and with money to spend, either on tweeds, which were virtually free of controls, or on pleasures, if they could find them. The temptations offered to a community so unaccustomed to town ways were considerable.

729 Those who returned least changed in their outlook upon
178 rural life were ex-prisoners-of-war, from the 51st Highland Division. At their own wish, they had received instruction
[423] in modern small-holding; and the demand from prison camps for land when the Highlanders would come home was upheld. It is especially among these men that agencies such as *An Comunn Gaidhealach* kept Gaelic tradition alive, linking it to the Highlanders' long thoughts of home. Next to these come naval seamen, while those most subject to urban influences were those who worked in factories. But whatever their experiences, home exerted a strong attraction. If work and a fair wage can be found in the township and on the crofts, and if social life can be renewed, many who returned will stay.

726 As in the First World War, so in the Second: few communities in Britain have had so large a proportion of their men in the Forces, in the fighting line and at sea,
[177] from the outbreak of hostilities. The Island community is almost without the exemptions due to 'essential occu-
[167] pations' such as commercial agriculture in the country, or
[727] war industry and administration in the towns. The toll has been heavy, and the nation's debt to the Islanders should be remembered.

464 For a year or two after the war many men and women
[288] returning from the Services, the sea or the factories found
employment in the flourishing Harris Tweed industry.
[729] This included work in the spinning mills and hand-weaving
at home—work in which the male weaver was helped by
[226] his family in jobs such as bobbin winding. Few fishermen
dared to sink capital in new boats and gear, and risk losses
[178] such as those sustained after 1920. Few women wished to
return to the hard, uncertain work of gutting. The whaling
[462] station, built on West Loch Tarbert before 1914 and open
for a short time between the wars, was reopened in 1950,
and employed some 30 men for 18 months before it closed
[241] in 1952. Crofting was lightened by some mechanised
cultivation. The war-time construction of air-fields had
[722] ceased, though some harbour-work and road-making was
[654] assisted by government grants.

In 1949 the Harris Tweed industry, now the Islanders'
288 main source for earning, was crippled by the imposition of
651 a 66⅔ per cent purchase tax on hand-woven Harris Tweeds.
Parliament decided that as a non-utility product, its export
648 sales alone could be exempt from tax. Viewing the
[433] position of the tweed industry in Britain as a whole, there
were strong arguments for the extension of the tax to
[171] Harris Tweeds: the high-grade industry of the Scottish
Border or the manufactures of the West Riding should not
be subjected to unfair handicap. At the same time the
crippling of a handicraft practised by peasant or artist
favours mass-production to the loss or ruin of traditional
and experimental workmanship or design to which, in the
end, the mass-production is an unacknowledging debtor.
The obvious economic handicaps of Island hand-weaving
[439] may surely permit some latitude. The export trade in
[458] Harris Tweed, in which the imponderable 'sentimental

288 651 648 value ' is important, is an appreciable dollar-earning asset; and because of the fluctuating export market, its manufacturing must be stabilised by sales at home.

[439] [458] These and other facts support the plea that if some share of taxation had to be imposed in the national interest, it should have been done by steps to permit of readjustment in manufacturing and of adaptation to the carefully fostered market. What seems indefensible, even in the national interest, was the imposition of the full 66⅔ purchase tax. As a result of this blow, the crofter's web could not be sold, and lay, a prey to moths, in his home, while the mill-owner's stock piled up in the warehouse. ' Hand-looms ', newly bought or partly paid for, lay rusting in the sheds and the machinery of the mills stood idle. The hand-weavers with their helpers and the employees in the mills, their [161] savings spent, began to seek work beyond the Island. As the census of April 1951 has shown, the population has been falling as workers trickled away by every steamer. Some adjustment was made, it is true, late in 1951; but the case of the small independent weaver remained as hard as ever.

288 433 [651] The amount of tweed stamped with the Orb Trade Mark, which diminished slowly from 4,464,000 standard yards in 1948 to 4,101,000 in 1949 and 3,780,000 in 1950, fell when the tax was imposed to 2,800,000 in 1951. In 1952 there was a recovery, maintained in 1953. Over 5,000,000 yards will have been stamped in 1954.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

ISLAND, REGION AND NATION. REGIONAL SURVEY FOR COMMUNAL SERVICE IN 'THE NORTH AND WEST'

[121] THE aim of this study has been the survey of a
region for the service of its society. Survey is
fundamental. As treatment should follow diag-
nosis, so should decision for action be based on balanced
knowledge. Until now this has too seldom been the case.
[311] In Scotland particularly our land and resources are as yet
imperfectly surveyed; our activities are still too hap-
[181] hazard and chaotic. There is work to be done and there
are hands to do it, but they have been kept unemployed;
the workless slackened in body and mind, and their spirits
failed; and our communities are still without clear aims
[185] in common. The first five years of peace have seen an
increased awakening to integrated planning. Planning
must be preceded by survey and be linked to international
order; it must be aimed towards better living and finer
[171] purpose. This study is part of a world-wide movement
of survey and planning directed, not first to private gain
but to common ends. In Western Europe until the war,
in the United States and (in a different way) in the war-
ravaged Soviet Union, men and women of good-will have
striven to prepare for a 'New Deal', region by region.

121 The importance of the 'regional' movement is inter-
185 regional and indeed international. In the case of the
Island, international order is required for its fisheries to
438 recover, and for its weaving to find purchasers abroad as well as at home. This in turn could allow small-holding to find an Island market in its little burgh, Stornoway. Without this triple basis of fishing, weaving and crofting for its economy, Island society will break up and its culture
[182] vanish, not evolve. It is no less true that only by the best utilisation of each regional environment, economy and society as we find them, will profiteers be held in check at home, and powerful peoples cease to exploit the sweat of others.

121 A pioneer American Report acknowledges the debt of
171 regional survey for the New Deal not only to France and Germany, but to a group of practical idealists, of geo-
[185] graphers, biologists and sociologists in Britain.[1] If nation-
ally we can be proud of Scots and British initiative in
[433] planning, we must own, until recently, to humiliating
[184] slowness in its execution, and in the mobilisation of regional resources for social ends. The chief end of our planning must be the re-making of society. In Britain it is not always realised that in the great developments of the New Deal the execution of concrete schemes which include civil engineering, industrial expansion and agricultural conservation, is accompanied by real cultural achievements, both urban and rural. Not only are geographers and economists, technicians, industrialists, and officials called to survey and plan the Tennessee Valley, but sociologists and educationists are required to complete the work. Not

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[113] [1] *Regional Factors in National Planning*, National Resources Committee, U.S.A., December 1935. Cf. Lewis Mumford (U.S.A.); and P. Geddes, P. Abercrombie, L. D. Stamp, E. A. Gutkind, G. H. J. Daysh, and others (Britain).

121 only the place but the people are to be understood, re-
171 spected and helped.

The planning movement is gathering impetus in Britain,
121 as it spreads outwards from bombed towns to countrysides,
embracing regions as a whole. It is certainly destruction
171 in war that has stabbed the nation's spirit 'broad awake',
185 awake to features of economic and moral disintegration
184 that preceded actual warfare. The realisation that defeat
of the common enemy called for common effort roused the nation to face its enemies of want and confusion at home. Yet the seeds of the planning movement were sown in peace, and only in peace can they grow to fruition. Planning, prepared for by the survey of each region as a whole, must lead towards the freeing of its people not only from physical want but from spiritual frustration. Based on the provision of work and a livelihood for individuals, planning should envisage the common weal and attempt to realise the deepest cravings of each community and serve their highest ideals. In a word, there must be a regional vision of the unity of life.

128 This book began by viewing the 'Outer' Isles as a
18 heart of 'the North and West' of the British Isles,
the innermost of a series of regions extending from the North-west Isles to the landward margin of the English 'Plain'. Differences in landscape and community, in history and modern life, make each of these regions unique in itself; yet—it was suggested—all possess certain features of landscape and evolution in common, which marked them off from the 'Plain' of the South-east. Some four physical and human frontier-lines or border-zones divide these regions. South-eastward from the Minch four were selected: the Highland Line, the Scottish Border, the edge of the older rocks of Britain and,

178 enclosing all, the zone from Severn to Tees. Having por-
18 trayed the environment and life of the Island—' innermost '
of the regional series, the next step was to extend this
survey beyond the Minch to the Highlands and Isles as
a whole, and then to compare these with the regions ex-
tending south-eastward—' outwards '—from the Isles to
the margin of the ' Plain ', through the regional series we
group as ' the North-and-West '.

121 Two main tasks lie before us in making comprehensive
community surveys, once the geographical basis is estab-
lished. The first task, historical in method, is the redis-
[133] covery of cultural foundations. These might be compared
(as we said at the outset) to the Archaean gneiss laid bare
only in the North-west, but still the foundation, albeit a
hidden one, of the ice-sculptured rocks of Highland Britain,
from the pre-Cambrian to the coal at the margin of the
overlying, differently sculptured rocks of the ' Plain '.
Understanding of the past can help us to understand not
only the evidence of the present, but latent, underlying
powers. Regional traditions, dormant for one, perhaps
for many generations, may germinate afresh if we can
understand the conditions in which they once grew and
also those needed to awaken them to new life in finer forms.

The other task of social survey must be to recognise the communal efforts of the present, and with eyes undimmed by prejudices of class or culture, grasp the relation of personal efficiency and self-realisation to life in teams or groups. The inherent cultural interests of the people of each region in work and leisure must be evaluated. Underlying actual achievements, latent powers may be discovered which must be freed for communal attainment. Better work under better conditions should bring about the flowering of personality in harmonious communities.

121 In every community, social and spiritual relations are inherent, and these, at one time inseparable in Island life, are once more winning recognition.

If this intensive study of a single isle has sustained the unity inherent in a region's environment, work and people, its first intention will have been accomplished. A second aim will have been achieved if it has faithfully re-interpreted the way in which small communities of 'Highland and Island Britain', in spite of their stark poverty, once realised their vision of fellowship, in labour, in leisure and in spiritual life. This aim led in turn to tracing the transitions through which the community reached their present stage of society.

In another book there have been presented means by which an integrated policy could be implemented for fishing, for weaving and other country industries, and for crofting. If that study of "The Resources and Prospects of the Isle" could contribute to a fresh economy for Island life, the third purpose of this survey would have been attained. The Islesmen themselves must show how economic development, planned with common purpose, may renew the communal, cultural and spiritual achievement of the Hebrides.

APPENDIX I

ECONOMIC STATISTICS OF LEWIS (AND HARRIS)

Introduction

127 433 THE assessment by the Lewis Association in their first Report on the Economic Position of Lewis (proper) in 1938 shows the income derived from " productive industry ". This was defined as that which " produces or tends to produce exchange value ", and therefore includes the production of the necessaries of existence by crofting as well as saleable commodities. This estimate covered the tweed industry and agriculture, and touched upon fishing.

434 For the first, the tweed industry, the figures are reliable, and the round total of £140,000 paid in wages to spinners and weavers in 1938 was a remarkable element of the Island income, more than half going to the weavers working at home. Altogether the tweed industry was estimated to provide over £300,000. For the second, agriculture, the current prices for crops and stock, combined with agricultural returns, were sufficiently reliable to give fair confidence in the estimate of production of nearly £200,000 (more precisely, £194,100). For the 3750 crofts an average value was obtained of nearly £50. To this was added the peat cut on the crofts, averaging £24, thought by some to be rather a high value. The work of building and improvement of houses was not included and this has been added, with an estimate of £40,000. For fishing (the third chief source of production mentioned in the Report), the income derived from local boats has here been distinguished from that earned by visiting boats, by combining official statistics with personal, local enquiries. From this fresh analysis a figure of £85,000 is offered here.

APPENDIX I

128 An effort has been made to separate crofting from other in-
come, and also to average the income from the sources given of
433 the total rural households, numbering 4700, composed of those
162 on the 3650 *occupied* crofts plus an estimated 1050 others, namely,
cottars and squatters, and 'feuars'—*i.e.* holding land in feu.

434 Finally, to the productive income earned on the Island there
should be added that received by earnings sent or brought
home to dependants, together with pensions, unemployment
relief and the like. I am greatly indebted to the appropriate
officials for the figures cited for 1937–38 or the year immediately
preceding. These sources average £45 per rural household.
[128] The figures tabled all apply to Lewis alone; but many figures
having been obtained for Harris also, conclusions are similar
there. The concluding Table (pp. 314-315) bears a note on
other sources of income, with a similar table for 1953.

(i) *Tweed Industry*

178 After deducting the cost of wool imported from the main-
434 land and certain other costs, the net productive income was
taken to be £307,000. The estimate may still err on the high
288 side but it indicates the prime importance of the industry in the Lews. For 1938 the quantity of tweed stamped, and certified as hand-woven by the Harris Tweed Association Ltd., was 2,830,900 imperial yards, rising in 1939 and 1940 to 4,000,000 yards, though falling thereafter. The value of the tweed produced in 1938 was approximately £500,000. The total wages paid in 1938 amounted to £140,000 (£139,600), rather more than half of which was paid to the weavers working at home. In 1940 this had risen to nearly £200,000, a slightly higher proportion falling to the weavers.

[365] In addition to the wages paid and the price paid for local
wool, the industry is a valuable customer of the Electricity Com-
pany and directly or indirectly provides much other employment
[651] in the Island. The industry also provided a market for a large
quantity of Scottish wool and contributed to taxation.

[458] The productivity and earnings of the industry continued to

434 be high until 1948. The year 1947 was the peak year for the production of Harris Tweed, with over 5,000,000 yards (of which
288 3,765,000 yards were stamped, and some 1,500,000 unstamped).
458 In 1948 the production of unstamped tweed had fallen to 500,000 yards but stamped tweed came to 4,380,000 yards.

(651) Then, in the year 1948 the imposition of a 66⅔ per cent purchase tax struck the industry a crippling blow. The rise in prices of wool increased difficulties, and by 1950 few orders were being booked and men were being paid off. A few small men who had relatively large stocks frozen by the purchase tax were able to sell them off, but this minor compensation for losses was short-lived. The outlook is disquieting.

(ii) *Agriculture, Peat-making and House-building*, 1938

434 (a) *Agriculture.*—The estimated agricultural output shows a total value of £189,100, and of this total the quantity fed
241 to animals was valued at £103,000. This leaves £86,100 as the estimated value of crop produce consumed on the Island. Adding this figure to the gross livestock output we arrive at a total valuation of the agricultural production of Lewis of approximately £194,100. To arrive at the average output per croft there was deducted the farm production, estimated at $\frac{1}{20}$ of the total by calculation from known crop and stock returns. This gives a figure for crofts alone of £184,400. By dividing by 3750, we obtain an average value of the gross annual production by crofters as £49, or say £50. The inclusion of squatters' produce would add so slightly to the total figure as hardly to affect the average for rural households. Outlays being small, most of this net output may be regarded as 'net earnings'.

434 (b) *Peat.*—To this sum must be added firing and some share in housing. The peat cut has been valued at £90,000, an
222 average of £24 per croft; it demands much labour. As peat
314 is freely cut by cottars and squatters, etc. (estimated at 1050 or so), the average value might be given as £19 per rural
[372] household. In Stornoway the chief fuel is coal.

(c) *House-building.*—From 1920 to 1940 the Department of

(c) House-building.

647 — From 1920 to 1940 the Department of Agriculture advanced loans for the erection of 760 new houses
654 and the repair of 220 other houses. This, with the erection
746 or repair of 40 steadings, may be taken as the equivalent of
1000 houses in the 20 years of peace, of which three-fourths
362 were new. Rural building was at its height in the early 'thirties,
356 but 1938 was a typical year. Taking the value of each house
as £600 and subtracting half for imported materials, we may
434 assume that for 50 houses built that year the labour given
produced an output of £15,000. In addition, some house-
362 building and repair was done without State aid, for which a
guess of £15,000 may be made. Such sums may not appear
356 large, but they correspond to the enduring fulfilment of a prime
[435] need, a 'real wage', of importance when compared to rents
and costs elsewhere. Of the expenditure on house-building
in Stornoway burgh during 1938, the value may be assessed as
£10,000, of which £9000 was for Local Authority housing.
Most of the total was produced by local labour.

(iii) *Fishing Industry—Net Output and Earnings*

434 (*a*) For 1938 the total catches, prices and quantities of
228 fresh cured fish landed in Stornoway District show a value of
nearly £100,000 (£98,000) for the herring catch, and of £162,400
for the cured herring. Our problem is to estimate what fraction
of these sums may be included in the net output of the Island
[127] industry proper. The Fishery Board's *Statistical Tables* and
Annual Report extract the produce brought in by local boats
from the total, separating it from that due to 'strangers', and
so permitting a fairly reliable estimate, checked by local enquiry.

228 Of the herring taken, nearly 80 per cent were caught in the
501 summer fishing, June to August (*Annual Report*, p. 13). The
week of maximum local activity in herring fishing for Stornoway
District may be taken to be characteristic of this pre-war period
(Table 8). There were then 111 steam-boats engaged; and as
only five were locally registered (at Stornoway itself), the
remaining 106 were strangers. There were also 66 motor-
boats engaged and though 81 motor herring-boats are locally

228 501 registered at the various ' creeks ', obviously all cannot have been engaged ; moreover, some strangers are invariably present, for which a guess of one-third would probably be conservative. The two sailing-boats were, of course, local.

Now, the average net tonnage of a drifter or a good East Coast motor-boat approached 40 tons, almost double the average tonnage of a local motor herring-boat (20 tons), and the catch was much in this ratio. During such a week and period, the total net tonnage of the 106 stranger drifters was thus about 106 × 40 tons, or say 4000 tons. That of stranger motor-boats may have been, say, 22 × 40 tons, or 800 to 900 tons, but the local tonnage was only 44 × 20 tons, another 800 to 900 tons, or, say, 1000 tons in all. This formed a fifth of the ' stranger ' total of close on 5000 tons. As the Stornoway Fishing District includes Harris which provided a third of the herring fleet, there remained only some 600 tons for Lewis, barely an eighth of the stranger tonnage. A fifth, say, of the tonnage probably means less than a fifth of the catch but a still smaller fraction of the sums paid for it, for the cream of the prices is skimmed by the boats first in, generally the bigger [434] and faster of the fleet. If we set against the catches probably due to the Harris boats, the catches of the winter fishing (about 15 per cent of the year's total), we shall still err on the safe side in estimating the annual catch due to boats from Lewis proper as no more than a fifth of the total (worth nearly £100,000), say £20,000.

228 434 To complete the estimate we add the curing of all herring brought into the District, almost all of it done in Stornoway. The difference between the value of the total catch (£98,000) and the gross value of cured herring (£162,000) is £64,000 ; but from this is deducted £26,000 for the imported barrels, salt, etc. This leaves an increment of £38,000 for the District curings, or, say, £35,000 for Lewis alone.

The landings of white fish (£13,600) and shell-fish (£6500) totalled £20,100 (Table 17). Of that, white fish valued at £4700 were brought into Stornoway port by East Coast ' great liners ' (Table 13), but the remainder was caught by local

228 boats; value, £15,400. Of this, the greater part came into Lewis creeks (Table 17), making £10,000 for Lewis.

434 Finally, we may add a round figure for whole or part-time occupations associated with the fisheries, including what accrues by the visiting fleet and its business, of, say, £20,000. This gives a total net output approaching £85,000 from fisheries for a typical year just before 1939.

[462] We now turn to an estimate of the earnings of fishermen and of the women engaged in curing. To some extent these figures overlap, for the value of the net output includes the wages of fishermen and women; but the sums earned on 'stranger' vessels—reduced now to some £3000—and the wages earned by women gutters and curers in East Anglia [436] (about £10,000) are additions to Lewis income. Some of this was, no doubt, sent home in the form of postal orders, etc., causing a further overlap, but much of it was probably sent in the form of notes or brought home in cash. In order to show the real net earnings of rural Lewis, these are separated from the output shown in the first column ((A, i) on p. 314) and are tabled under "Earnings by Crofting and Associated Rural Occupations only" (A, ii).

[127] (*b*) *Fishers' Earnings*.—As no figures of local earnings are separately published, estimates must be based upon the collation of the Fishery Board's *Annual Statistical Tables* and [178] accompanying *Annual Reports* with careful local enquiries. By 1938 the fishermen on Stornoway District herring fishing vessels were reduced to about 350 men and boys in the summer season, of whom only a few worked in autumn and winter. Their earnings included the earnings of share owners of boats and of nets, and of those without shares, the latter being only a fraction, say a quarter, of the total. Nearly 100 District men still worked on 'stranger' (East Coast) vessels at the summer fishing and rather fewer at the East Anglia autumn fishing. The sum so earned may have been a third or more of the earnings on District vessels. Altogether the total net earnings from herring fisheries received by all fishermen from Lewis proper came to little more than £8000. By 1938 the

434 average wage for the summer season dropped to about £25.
The number of women engaged in gutting and packing
(and kippering) herrings varies from year to year. In 1938 1000
228 were engaged locally in summer, most of whom also went to
434 East Anglia. As always, the greater part of the wages was
earned in the summer and the remainder in the East Anglia
462 (autumn) fishing season. The net average earnings per worker
of the Scottish gutters and packers were estimated at £16 at the
Scottish summer fishings and £17 at the East Anglian fishing
(*Annual Report*, p. 12). This figure included 'arles' (*i.e.*
earnest money), but excluded travelling expenses. The
Stornoway District earnings averaged £16 at the local summer
fishing but only £15 at the East Anglia fishing. The latter is a
small return to place against the skill of the worker and
the discomfort she endures. The women work in small teams
together, and their efficiency is partly due to their comradeship.

228 Figures for catches have already been given as approaching
434 £20,000 for herring and £10,000 for white fish and shell-fish.
While the net earnings derived, after subtracting the working
expenses of boats and outlays for gear, were very much less
than this gross sum, a substantial part should be counted as
equivalent to earnings (Statistical Table 21).

Summing up the total net earnings, we arrive at the following
[462] for Lewis proper. The women's total net earnings may be
taken as £25,000. We add to the probable earnings of the men
at the herring fishing an allowance for their profits from other
catches, making a total of say £15,000.

178 The industry was still declining here as elsewhere in
Scotland. About 1930 the earnings of hired hands alone
228 reached £30,000 and that of women twice as much, say £60,000.
434 Besides this was the important sum earned by men with share
of boats. The local white fish and shell-fish catches were also
[656] considerably higher at that period. As to the future, much
will depend on what can be done to rehabilitate the local
industry by compensation for losses incurred in war, and by
assurance that government policy will encourage local fishermen
to embark on their enterprise without the risk of the

178 crippling losses suffered after 1914–18. A beginning has
228 certainly been made. The Herring Industry Board's scheme for
'Queen of Scots' kippers will help the Minch fishing. It will
434 not necessarily help the ports of Stornoway or Tarbert, because
herring can be landed at mainland ports and treated there or else
taken by road to the Moray Firth, kippered there, and still qualify
under the scheme. The Scottish Agricultural Organisation
Society has aided the marketing of lobsters to good purpose.

(iv) *Other Sources of Income earned in the Island*

114 It is to be hoped that members of the Lewis Association
814 may ascertain these, perhaps in collaboration with University
research workers. This, in turn, might instructively be collated with the imports and exports of the Island, which are recorded and ascertainable with a precision impossible for a similar area on the mainland. Thus the facts would throw light on the economy of other crofting districts.

(v) *Allowances, Pensions, Unemployment Assistance and Remittances*

657 With regard to money received by the crofting communities
434 of Lewis from other than 'productive' sources, figures have
kindly been made available regarding three sources, namely, (*a*)
436 Allowances made to members of the Forces and their dependents,
729 and Pensions, (*b*) Unemployment payments, and (*c*)
Money Orders and Postal Orders. The yearly periods for which
434 figures are available are close enough to permit of reasonable
comparisons. Among other sources, Bank Drafts form an insignificant fraction of monies received by crofters from outside
[505] the Island. It is impossible to say how much cash is brought
home by men paid off from the Merchant Service and other
[464] employment, or how much may be sent through the post in the
form of notes, whether registered or unregistered. The amount is known to be large, however, and an estimate based on the number of insured employed, and other figures, would be of value. A token figure is suggested in a note to the concluding Table.

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729 For the year 1937–38, Allowances paid to members of the
434 Forces and their dependants in Lewis (proper) came to £40,000.
Of this sum a greater part was paid through Stornoway Post
Office than might have been expected from the town's population.
But able-bodied recipients of Allowances are attracted
to the town by the likelihood of finding work there, while
men of higher rank and pay are apt to be townsfolk, and their
657 dependants also. Old Age, Orphans' and Widows' Pensions
434 exceeded £80,000. Of this sum a relatively large amount was
also paid through Stornoway Post Office, partly for administrative
reasons, rendering other causes harder to disentangle.

We turn now to the next source named, Unemployment Assistance. The Bureau made payments of £120,000 in 1936—the last year for which relevant statistics were made available. Of this sum, about one-third was Insurance Benefit, derivable in principle from the joint earnings of workers, and two-thirds were Public Assistance, contributions to which were made from local rates. The fraction paid to Stornoway workers was relatively small, and may be estimated at barely £10,000, that of rural payees accounting for the remaining £110,000. As the Means Test took account of the croft (or smaller holding with house), the average payment to individuals was small.

434 Turning to Money Orders, and taking the balance of pay-
ment and issue at face value, there was actually an outflow from
436 the Island instead of an influx, for the issues exceeded the payments.
In Lewis in 1937–38, whereas nearly £60,000 was
issued in Money Orders, only a little over £30,000 was paid.
Even allowing for the fact that part of the payments is cashed
through banks or cleared at a central Post Office on the mainland,
there would appear to be an outflow, as centralised
clearances probably amount to no more than 35 to 40 per cent.
The amounts in Postal Orders paid were smaller, totalling
£23,000, and the difference between payments and issues less.

434 Comparisons between town and country are instructive.
Stornoway's position as a shopping centre is reflected in the
436 heavier average of Money Order payments per head per annum
369 as compared with rural areas (£8·4 as against £1·1); and the

APPENDIX I

434 436 369 difference between the issues and the payments in rural areas (£28,000 as against £13,000) is no doubt due to orders drawn to pay accounts. In this connection, a comparison of conditions at an interval of nine years is suggestive for any attempt to distinguish the difference between rural incomes before and after the economic depression. In rural Lewis the total Order payments fell from over £33,000 in 1928–29 to barely £22,000 in 1937–38, a fall of more than a third. Although a decline in the payment of Money Orders in Stornoway was partly offset by an increase in that of Postal Orders there, it is thought that even this reflects a fall in the cash available in the townships, by indicating a fall in the average amount of accounts paid by country customers to Stornoway tradesmen. Even here, it is true, some allowances must be made, as latterly more shopping was done by customers coming into Stornoway by car and probably paying to a greater extent in cash.

[657] [161] Comparisons may now be made, for all the data quoted, between Stornoway and the rural or 'landward' areas of Lewis, and also between landward parishes for all except the Unemployment payments. Population having changed but little from 1931 to 1938, and economic conditions not being very different in the Island in the financial years 1936 and 1937–38, an approximation can be made of payments averaged per head of population. In the following table these are shown in £ sterling to one decimal place.

Average Payments (per Head per Annum)

434 436 369 657 729

	Stornoway Burgh	Stornoway Landward	Barvas	Lochs	Uig	Average Landward
	£	£	£	£	£	£
(*a*) Allowances and Pensions	10·2	3·3	4·0	3·6	5·9	3·9
(*b*) Unemployment Payments	2·6	..	..	..	..	5·1
(*c*) Money and Postal Orders	(8·4)	1·0	0·9	1·2	1·3	1·1
Total	..	..	..	..	..	10·1

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434 369 The significant figure here is the average total payment per head in the rural or 'landward' area, a sum of ten pounds sterling, the complexity of urban conditions, even in a small town, making the total for the Burgh less significant. To put it differently, an average rural household of 4·5 persons thus received a sum of £45 a year from these sources.

All these figures—pointers to the complete facts, unascertained as yet—show that even with the help of these sources the average income of the rural Islanders was small. Comparisons of such figures with those for the rest of Britain would, of course, be misleading. To those who spend their working lives outside their native isle, Lewis is no more than a home; and for them it should therefore be compared to some urban suburb or 'dormitory', rather than to an urban centre of production or a typical agricultural district in the Lowlands.

434 171 178 It may help to compare the conditions of 1938 with those of 1951 if, say, average weekly wage earnings for all British workers in employment are taken for October of both years. Thus, taking the 1938 earnings of 53s. 3d. as 100, those of 1951 were 141s. 1d. or 265 per cent of the first, a figure to be related to the cost of living index which had only risen from 100 to 202 per cent. The total wage-bill gave a still higher increase for Britain, from 100 in 1938 to 287 per cent in 1951. As food forms a heavy part of the doubled cost of living to people in poverty or near it, the crofters' own food does not greatly relieve them. The loss of employment following the close of the mills left little for them but to seek employment beyond the Island.

434 311 Summing up the facts of this Appendix, it may be said that the Island furnishes (1) means for partial subsistence for most; (2) means of earning a livelihood, for some; and (3) a home from which many go forth to earn a living for themselves (and their families) elsewhere—meantime contributing to national and local income there. Of these, many return later, either to found a home, to pay visits on holiday or during periods of ill-health or unemployment, or to retire upon the Island.

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3: Geddes K-4,5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

I. *Circa* 1938.

Selected Estimates of (A) *Net Output of Productive Industry and* (B) *Certain Other Sources of Income, in Lewis (proper)*

(A) *NET OUTPUT OF PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRY*

(i) URBAN AND RURAL

Net earnings of tweed industry		£307,000
Agriculture (including farms)		194,100
Peat		90,000
House-building and improvement		40,000
Fishing		
Herring (by local boats)	£20,000	
Curing total catch	35,000	
Associated income	20,000	
White fish, etc. (local)	10,000	
Total local fishing	£85,000	85,000
Wages, (fishers on stranger boats)		3,000
,, (women in East Anglia)		10,000
Total (A, i)		£729,100

(ii) EARNINGS BY CROFTING AND ASSOCIATED RURAL OCCUPATIONS ONLY:

(*a*) Crofts only, 3750; (*b*) All Rural (including cottars and squatters), 4700 households

			Average per Household (*a*) *Crofts*	*Average per Household* (*b*) *All Rural*
Earnings of hand-weavers		£75,000		£17·0
Spinners		5,000		
Agriculture (crofting only)		184,350	£49	39·2
Peat		90,000	24	19·0
Housing (State-aided)		15,000		3·0
,, (Other (say))		15,000		3·0
Fishing				
Herring (by rural fishers)	£8,000			
Curing (by rural women)	15,000			
,, (in East Anglia)	10,000			
White fish, etc.	7,000			
Total fishing	£40,000	40,000		8·5
Total (A, ii)		£424,350		£89·7
			(Approx.)	£90

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(B) REMITTANCES (BY POST), ALLOWANCES, PENSIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS

With Averages per Rural Household

(i) URBAN AND RURAL			(ii) RURAL (a) *Official Rural*	(b) *Estimated Rural*	(c) *Average per Household*
Money and Postal Orders	£53,700		£31,700	£34,900	£7·4
Allowances (Forces)	41,000		30,400	33,000	7·0
Pensions (State)	82,700		54,100	60,000	12·7
Unemployment payments	120,000		110,000	110,000	23·4
Total (B, i)	£297,400	Total (B, ii)	£226,200	£237,500	£50·5
					(Approx.) £51
Total (i, A and B)	£1,026,500	Total (ii, A and B)	£650,550	£661,850	£141

NOTE.—To complete the estimate of rural income, partly indicated by (A) and (B) we should require to group with (A) certain sources of income of productive character such as road-making and the creation of other services, and to add to (B) other savings and pensions from outside the Island which may be received as Bank-notes by post, as Bank Drafts, and in cash brought home by earners. The figures of £110,000 for Unemployment Assistance, and of £35,000 for Money and Postal Orders, suggest that it would not be too much to add a figure equal to at least the two combined, or £145,000, towards making an income of another £30 or so per rural household. By bringing the sources of income to at least £170—still a very small amount—we should approach a true figure, which cannot, at best, be large.

APPENDIX II

RECENT STATISTICS (1953-54)

128 In briefer form, the basic economic data can now be reviewed,
433 in the same order, for 1953, or the period April 1953 to March
1954, as available. The results are shown on the second pair
434 of Tables, pp. 318-319.

(i) *Tweed Industry* (1953-54)

434 Taking 5,000,000 yards as the 1953-54 total, and accepting
an estimate of 1s. 2d. paid to weavers per finished, mill-shrunk
288 yard, payments to weavers in Lewis-and-Harris (and a few in
463 the southern Hebrides) would amount to some £291,700. After
subtracting the output from Harris, this corresponds to an informal estimate by the Lewis Association for Lewis proper of well over £250,000 and more, probably £275,000 for the period. Adding the wages of spinners in Stornoway mills, and also of carriers, dockers, etc., it is thought safe to double the figure, with £550,000, for Lewis, rural and urban. Most of the weaving is rural. The increased use of daily bus transport allows rural dwellers to come to Stornoway daily to earn and so has increased the ratio of rural to urban wages by spinning and other labour. For rural carriers and mill-employees, a fifth of £275,000 is taken here, making £55,000. As no estimate for the 'net earnings' in Lewis is available, the same ratio to wages is taken as in 1938, making £1,200,000.

(ii) *Agriculture, Peat-making and House Building* (1953)

178 (a) *Agriculture.*—First, the trend of crop and stock pro-
duction can be indicated by selected figures for the Island for
434 1918, 1939 and 1953. The areas both of oats and rotation
241 grass increased, the three successive totals in acres being, for
oats: 4460, 5020, 5440; and for rotation grass: 390, 1385,

APPENDIX II

178 2110. The acreage under potatoes declined steadily: 3940,
434 3730, 1650. Barley dwindled from 2350 acres to 1340, and
130. Turnips reached a maximum of 510 acres in 1939, but
241 were not worth noting by 1953. These crop acreages reflect
the change in stock-rearing, with the decline in the number of
178 cattle but the great increase in the number of sheep. Taking
434 the three successive totals for 1918, 1939 and 1953, cattle
numbered 13,620, 9060 and 6540 head; but this diminution
231 by more than half was chiefly due to the small number of
bullocks reared. Cows and heifers, 7650 in 1918, still stood at about 4500 in 1953, and they are now of far better quality in weight and milk production. The totals of sheep were successively, 78,150, 114,330, 185,860; by use of mainland rams their average weight has increased, while the wool is rather more abundant but coarser. Taking the Lewis Association's equivalent of 1 cattle beast to 8 sheep, the livestock carry increased by nearly 25 per cent; and if we add the increased value of the cattle the livestock increase counts for very much more. Horses, it is true, fell to 380 by 1953; as before, most had been bought in from Uist, not bred. Hence a new charge on agriculture, the purchase and use of the 65 tractors owned by farmers and crofters, and their running costs, is relatively less heavy than it would be in a horse-breeding area. The poultry are still deplorably few: 86,460, or about 20 per croft.

[632] The Table on p. 316 sums up the conditions, apparently somewhat stabilised for the time being, parish by parish, and invites comparison with Chapter II, pp. 67-68.

178 (b) and (c) *Peat-making and House-building*.—While *peat-
cutting* is still important, more coal is used than formerly, and
222 hence the peat is valued here much as in 1938. *Housing* is
314 most important; Local Authority housing by the Burgh
struggles to meet the need of a growing urban and 'suburban'
178 population as in other towns in Britain, but with an additional
362 "remote area subsidy" to meet mainland contractors' extra
costs. There is little truly rural housing by the County Council
647 and rents are too high for the houses to be fully occupied. The
63 figures for Stornoway Burgh for the ten years 1945-54 exceed

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300 houses, with nearly 30 built by " private enterprise "; in addition the Local Authorities built 140 in the immediate ' suburbs ' (of which 50 were temporary), a total of over 470 and an average of, say, 47. Another 115 were built in the rural townships. If we give a round total of £125,000 as the value for an average year (such as 1953) for Local Authority Housing, we may allot half this to net output of local materials and to wages earned by Lewismen, some £65,000, of which rural wages were a small fraction, say £20,000.

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	Barvas	Lochs	Stornoway	Uig	Lewis Total	Harris
Holdings						
Full-time	5	12	8	21	49	34
Part- and spare-time	1,050	580	1,160	630	3,420	510
June 1953 (acres)						
Oats	2,080	520	1,220	900	4,730	710
Potatoes	550	180	450	260	1,440	210
Tillage	2,860	730	1,810	1,196	6,590	1,280
Rotation Grass	580	300	690	290	1,850	260
Permanent Grass	2,870	2,460	3,250	3,150	11,730	4,030
Grass	3,450	2,760	3,940	3,440	12,580	4,290
Rough Grazing	93,580	107,180	56,480	111,250	368,490	111,170
(head)						
Cattle	1,350	860	1,330	1,360	4,900	1,640
Sheep	38,110	37,810	23,670	42,690	142,280	43,580
Pigs	10	2	110	3	130	..
Poultry	25,370	9,880	25,910	13,060	74,220	12,240
Horses	180	25	60	60	320	60
February 1954						
Tractors	24	4	24	5	57	8

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For crofters and cottars, however, in 1953, a fairly typical year, there was much local effort and achievement, by help of 180 loans and grants from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, totalling £81,000 for new houses or house improvements (with a very few steadings). £80,000 may be allotted to local materials and to labour paid or given by householders themselves.

APPENDIX II

434 (iii) *Fishing Industry* (1953)

228 [439] The renewed Russian contracts for herring have meant loading of Baltic shipping at Stornoway with barrels of herring cured both in Stornoway and Ullapool. Catching power in Scotland generally is hardly enough to meet this contract. Thus, while the numbers of boats continued to decline after the war, leaving only one steam and 33 motor drifters (over 30 feet keel) registered by 1953, the fishermen employed rose to 610, of whom some 520 were crofter-fishermen. Many worked much of the year; on the other hand, most of the winter catch went for 'oil and meal' at about 50s. per cran instead of the top price of over 80s. For local boats a figure of £30,000 is suggested for the catch of herring, say £10,000 for white fish,
[178] with £5560 for shellfish. For "curing and associated income" the pre-war figures may be doubled.

(iv) *Other Sources of Income earned in the Island* (1953)

434 465 In mid-1953, of just 5000 registered for the Island as employed—and other than the self-employed, *i.e.* the farmers and crofters, the hand-weavers and the boat-sharing fishers—1130 earned by the three industries first named, the rest by other trades and professions, 3870 in all. The unemployed numbered 1180. Analysis of wage-rates would throw light on
[657] total earnings. As to unemployment, the fact that, like crofters and many fishers, hand-weavers count as 'self-employed' means that when out of work they are not covered by unemployment insurance, and have to be helped, at low rates, by public assistance.

(v) *Allowances, etc.* (1953)

434 657 436 729 Turning now to Remittances, to the manifold categories of Pensions, National Insurance and National Assistance, and to Unemployment Benefit (a small item), the Table B, 1953-54, shows the totals kindly furnished for this study, with £1,017,110 for all Lewis and an estimated £977,010 for rural Lewis.

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II. *Circa* 1953 and 1953–54

Selected Estimates of* (A) *Net Output of Productive Industry, 1953, and* (B) *Certain Other Sources of Income, 1953–54 in Lewis (proper)

(A) *NET OUTPUT OF PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRY* (1953)

(i) URBAN AND RURAL

Net earnings of tweed industry (taken as)		£1,200,000
Agriculture (including farms)		360,000
Peat		100,000
House-building and improvement		145,000
Fishing		
Herring (by local boats)	£30,000	
Curing total catch	70,000	
Associated income	40,000	
White fish, etc. (local)	15,560	
Total local fishing	£155,560	155,560
Wages (fishers on stranger boats)		3,000
„ (women in East Anglia)		10,000
Total (A, i)		£1,973,560

(ii) EARNINGS BY CROFTING AND ASSOCIATED RURAL OCCUPATIONS ONLY:

(*a*) Crofts (with squatter holdings, 3540: (*b*) All Rural (including cottars and squatters), 4700 households

			Average per Household	
			(*a*) *Crofts*	(*b*) *All Rural*
Earnings of hand-weavers		£275,000		£70
Spinners		55,000		
Agriculture (crofting only)		340,000	£91	74
Peat		100,000	28	21
Housing (Local Authority)		20,000		21
„ (D.A.S.)		80,000		
Fishing				
Herring (by rural fishers)	£20,000			
Curing (by rural women)	15,000			
„ (in East Anglia)	10,000			
White fish, etc.	7,000			
Total fishing	£52,000	52,000		12
Total (A, ii)		£922,000	(Appr.)	£198

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(B) *REMITTANCES (BY POST), ALLOWANCES, PENSIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS*

With Averages per Rural Household (1953-54)

	(i) Urban and Rural		(ii) Rural		
			(*a*) *Official Rural*	(*b*) *Estimated Rural*	(*c*) *Average per Household*
Money and Postal Orders	£196,680		£85,600	96,160	£20·5
Allowances (Forces) and Pensions (State), with Unemployment payments	820,430		590,470	880,850	187·4
Total (B, i)	£1,017,110	**Total (B, ii)**	£676,070	£977,010	£207·9
Total (i, A and B)	£2,990,670	**Total (ii, A and B)**	£1,598,070	£1,899,010	(Approx.) £208 (Approx.) £405

APPENDIX III

(A) THE STORNOWAY TRUST: A COMMUNAL OPPORTUNITY

632 The people of Stornoway town and rural parish are in a
175 position to control their own future to a degree unusual in
Britain since the general loss of common lands in the eighteenth
178 century. Three or four bodies or groups are important in
local governance, and in addition to these an effort to arouse
632 citizenship has taken shape in the Lewis Association. As elsewhere,
623 the Town Council acts for the burgh and, it should be
added, the Grazing Committees for the townships, the District
423 Council and County Council acting for wider spheres. The
361 Harbour Trust has its special charge. In addition, the fact of
corporate ownership is important, as vested in the Stornoway
Trust. Besides property in the burgh and its suburbs, including
the Castle and its park or policies, the Trust owns virtually
the whole landward area of the parish, from Arnish Moor north
to Tolsta. It should not be forgotten that the resources of the
sea are public property and that the inshore fishings, owing to
a considerable measure of protection, are virtually in the possession
of the coastal communities. Freshwater fishing is also
in the hands of the Trust. Thus, not only building property
but essential sources of production on land and sea are in
communal possession. The Trust was formed in 1924.

623 During the first five years of its existence the Trust was
burdened with a growing deficit, but since 1929 it accumulated
433 a credit balance, due partly to agricultural derating and partly
to the registration of the Trust as a charity and the resulting
relief from income tax. Possession without prevision can do
little, however; and hence the need for the citizens of town
and country to regroup themselves as thinkers for the common

623 good. In response to this realisation, and encouraged too by
433 the growth and prosperity of the tweed industry, the Lewis
Association sprang into being in 1942–43. The Association's aims are survey, planning and the initiation of action for the public welfare, economic, social and spiritual. Something should be said of each of these bodies in turn.

623 The membership of the Town Council, Harbour Trust and
633 Stornoway Trust overlap, the Town being represented on both
Trusts. Indeed by the conditions of the Deed of Trust drawn
433 up by Leverhulme (in 1923–24), the Stornoway Trust must
361 include the Provost of the Burgh as its Chairman, together with
Magistrates and Councillors. For some time past the Provosts and Councillors have been chosen from the more important
[369] business men of the town. Indeed as a result of the constitution of the Stornoway Trust, urban interests and outlooks might easily gain undue preponderance at the expense of rural needs. Nevertheless two members with strong rural ties were elected to the Trust in recent years.

In view of the growing burden of deficit, the Trust felt unable to frame a general policy, still less to carry it into action. To meet the deficit, the Trust sold portions of properties without reference to any general plan of town or country. Even after the Trust began to accumulate a favourable balance, hand-to-mouth decisions continued to be made, undirected by any clear policy. The most lamentable case occurred when a garage site was given to the chief Stornoway bus proprietor at a road junction near the western entrance to the town, close to the principal new housing schemes and opposite the main gate of Lews Castle and the Lady Lever Park. The palpable mistake in siting soon caused strong public criticism. The Trust repented, and sought to distrain the garage proprietor
[686] from extended use of the area. The parties went to law and the case was fought through the courts until, in a final decision reached in the House of Lords, the Trust lost and had to pay a bill of some £4000. The lesson of defeat in the court was severe, capped as it was by the equivalent of a fine of £4 or £5 from every family in the burgh. Coming at a time when the need

623 633 433 361 for planning preceded by adequate survey became publicly recognised, this crisis seems to have caused a change to constructive policy on the part of the Trust. It led to the election of a new member of the Trust on a planning platform, and to a general searching of heart and mind in the community.

(184) Meantime the movement for town planning which had spread from the bombed cities to the rest of the country, led to a closer co-ordination of planning aims between the Trust and the Town Council, and there is real hope of progress in collaboration with the County Council as the statutory planning authority.

In brief, the opportunity arose for the Trust to frame a comprehensive policy, one binding together the objects separately listed in the Deed, " to promote the material and social welfare of the community ". The ' material ' provisions of the Deed allow for the promotion of industry—including fishing, of course—of agriculture and afforestation, and of communications by land, sea and air. Medical service is not forgotten. The encouragement of social life and education is foreseen, and bursaries may be provided to enable deserving scholars to proceed to secondary schools and universities.

185 It is felt by far-sighted citizens that these aims should be
properly co-ordinated. Development of resources and social
life, they feel, could be combined with education and training
deliberately designed to equip young people to return to the
Island and use their capacities to serve their own community.
[311] Thus among the development schemes which have been
mooted are the reclamation of peat, the reclamation of the
sandy inlet just north of Stornoway, and local afforestation.
[871] All these technical jobs require training, at the levels of engineer
and skilled foreman or working hand. Bursaries might take
[168] the form of education for such rural tasks. The ' export ' of
talent may be necessary when no outlet is possible at home,
but in the end it can drain away the community's youth.
Hence a policy for the return of talent is required. For fishing,
for industry and particularly for the weaving arts, training is
required in preparation for possible careers at home. Lastly

185 for the social arts, education could be won abroad by those who have imbibed at least some part of their native heritage but who cannot easily learn how to make the best of their birthright. At this time, change of outlook must be radical for all, but most of all perhaps for those communities who are in process of changing from one tongue to another, and for whom there is therefore so much to lose, so much—potentially—to keep, and so much to be gained.

In the Island there is a strong feeling that reorientation is required to direct surveys which may enlighten policy and lead to action in common. It was as a result of this that the Lewis Association came to be formed.

(B) THE LEWIS ASSOCIATION

185 623 In the constitution of the Lewis Association are embodied ' six fundamental principles ' which illustrate the feeling quickened among thoughtful citizens in time of war, that ' temporal ' considerations require the guidance of the spiritual. They run as follows : " (1) There is a law of God, to which all men must conform in their social, economic and political relationships. (2) The Resources of this Island should be used as God's gift and for future generations. . . . (3) Every child should find itself a member of a family housed with decency and dignity, in a happy fellowship, unspoiled by drab surroundings ; and (4) have an education, planned for his aptitudes and development and inspired by faith. . . . (5) Every citizen should be secure to enable him to maintain a home. . . . (6) The community should provide for its members' recreation to enable them to enjoy a full personal life. . . ."

What is the Association achieving, it will be asked. A member remarked that, imperfect as the findings might be, a useful purpose was served in regular gatherings of a number of people to thrash out the facts together. A remarkable and perhaps a surprising measure of agreement has been reached, in view of the highly controversial nature of many of the

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subjects discussed, and their relation to issues which had aroused heated public argument and even led to lawsuits. It was thought that conveners of committees might have difficulty in maintaining harmony, but this had not been the case; discussion had been frank and warm, but not overheated. Preparatory discussions, followed by publicity, had done much to arouse the townsfolk, in particular, to questions of planning. The result contributed to greater keenness in the elections to the Trust, and led to new activity in Trust and Council. As a local association such as this is somewhat unusual as yet, is it an early sign, as one would hope, of a widespread movement for survey and service? Their example is being followed elsewhere.

When formed, the personnel of the Association, compared to that of many war-time bodies, was comparatively young; and younger members found a welcome and a role to fill on their return from the Forces. The Association owes its inception both to men and women, to natives and residents of long standing, and also to comparative new-comers. The first Chairman, a minister of the Church of Scotland with experience of local government in a great Lowland county, was the Rev. Ian Carmichael, D.S.O., M.C. The Honorary Secretary, Mr. J. S. Grant, is the editor of the weekly *Stornoway Gazette* in succession to his father. An able journalist, Mr. Grant is reputed throughout Scotland as a writer of plays on themes significant to national life. To start with, the membership was largely urban, though country schoolmasters and others whose duties lie in the landward townships took an active part. Meetings were then held in villages to enlarge the rural membership and justify the name and aims of the Association, by making it truly " representative of each district in the island of Lewis ". Its publications are models of their kind.

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A	B	C
D	E	F

Chart of Positions of End Map
[Facing End Map]

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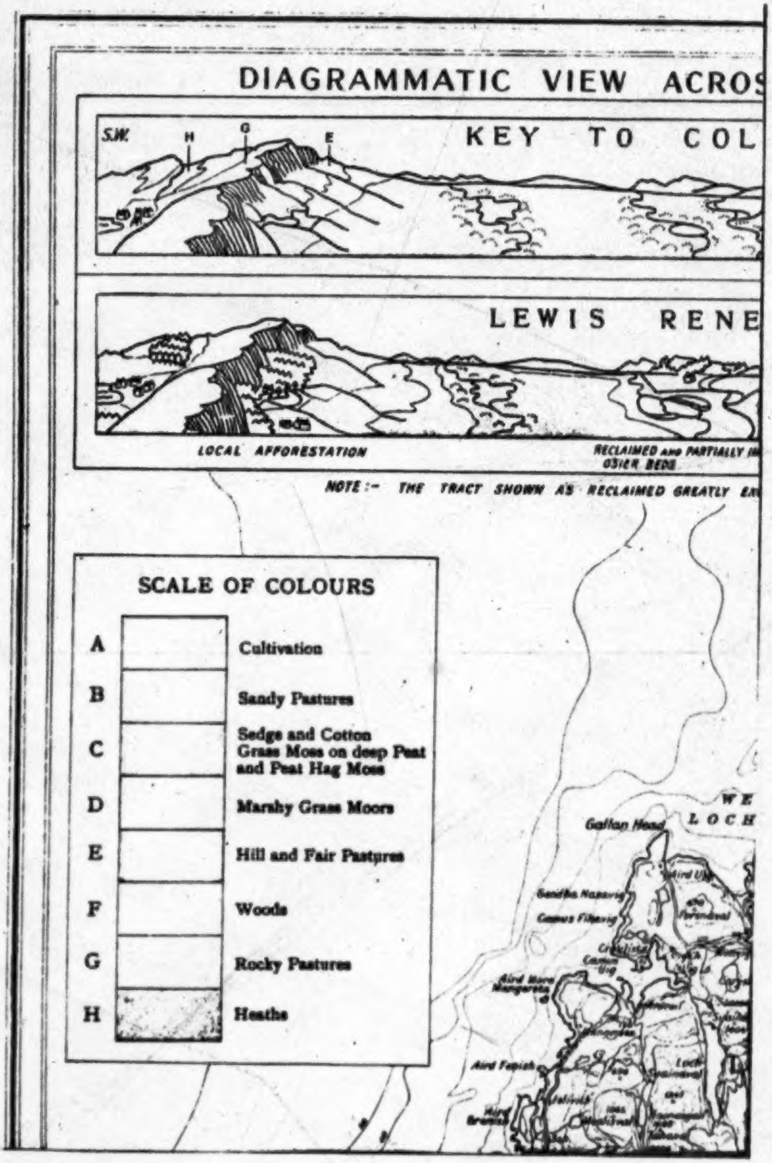
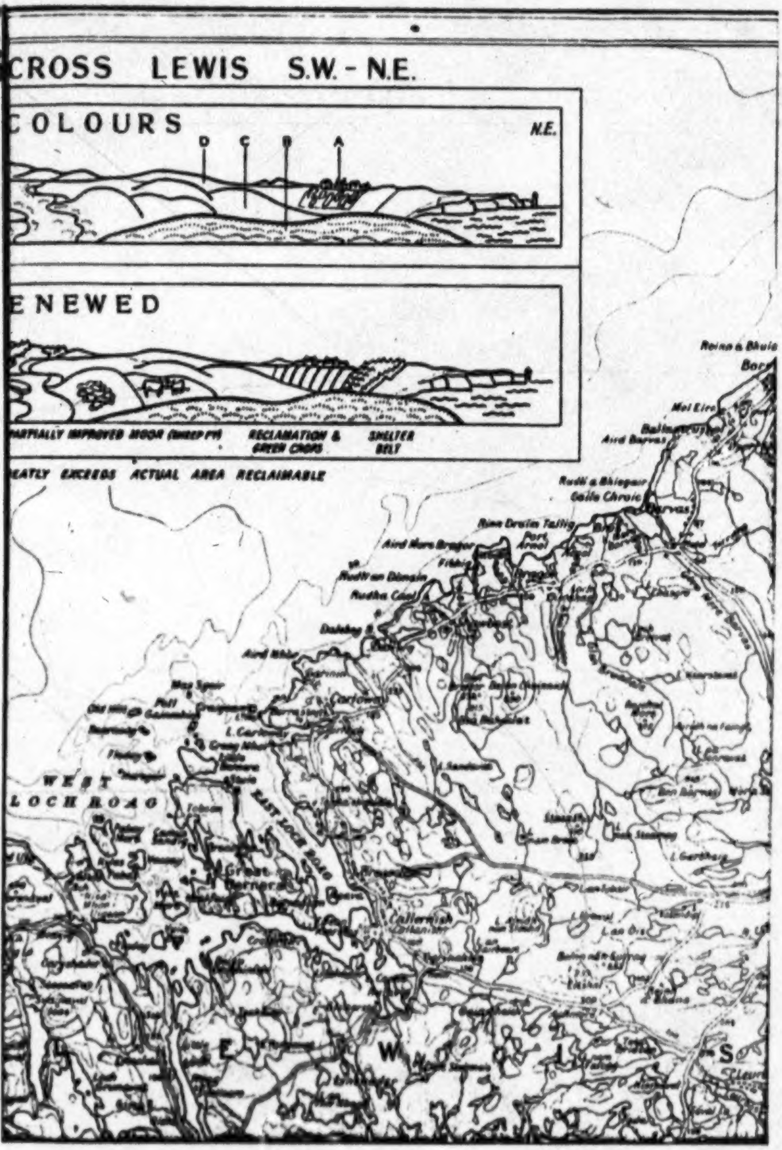
103
13
311


DIAGRAMMATIC VIEW ACROS
KEY TO COL
S.W.
H
G
E
LEWIS RENE
LOCAL AFFORESTATION
RECLAIMED AND PARTIALLY
OSIER BEDS
NOTE:- THE TRACT SHOWN AS RECLAIMED GREATLY
SCALE OF COLOURS
A Cultivation
B Sandy Pastures
C Sedge and Cotton Grass Moss on deep Peat and Peat Hag Moss
D Marshy Grass Moors
E Hill and Fair Pastures
F Woods
G Rocky Pastures
H Heaths
WE
LOCH
Gallan Head
Aird Mhor Mangersta
Aird Fenish
Aird Brenish

[End Map - A]

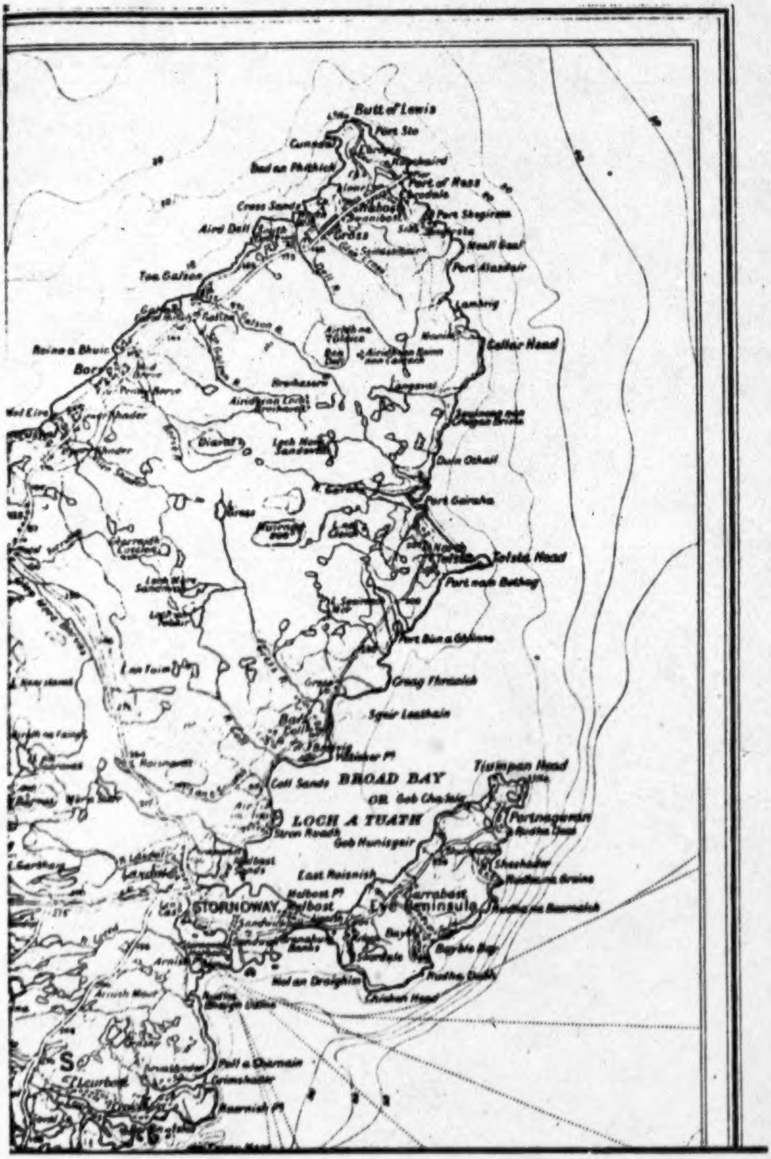
102
103
13
311


CROSS LEWIS S.W. - N.E.
COLOURS
N.E.
D
C
B
A
ENEWED
PARTIALLY IMPROVED MOOR (SHEEP FR)
RECLAMATION & GREEN CROPS
SHELTER BELT
EATLY EXCEEDS ACTUAL AREA RECLAIMABLE
WEST LOCH ROAG
EAST LOCH ROAG
Great Bernera
Callernish
E
W
I
S

[End Map - B]

3:Geddes K-4,5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

102
103
13
311

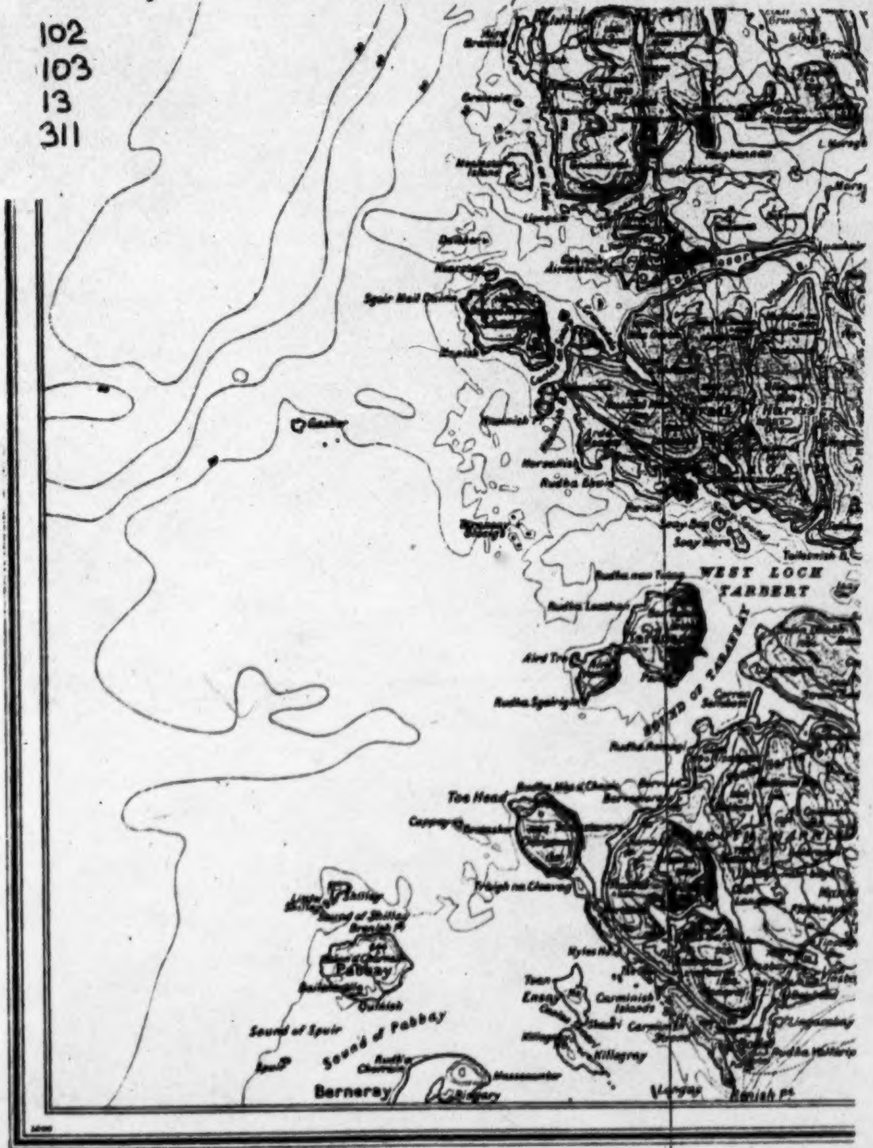


Butt of Lewis
Port Sto
Cunndal
Europie
Knockaird
Bod an Fhithich
Port of Ness
Swainbost
Port Skegirsta
Cross Sands
Aird Dell
Cross
Skigersta
Neall Gaal
Port Alasdair
Tea Galson
Galson
Lambrig
Cellar Head
Roinn a Bhuic
Borve
Brathasere
Dun Othail
Port Geiraha
Tolsta Head
Port nam Bothag
Port Bùn a Ghlinne
Creag Fhraoich
Sgeir Leathain
BROAD BAY
OR Gob Chaisteil
LOCH A TUATH
Tiumpan Head
Portnaguran
Coll Sands
Steen Roads
Gob Huniagair
East Roisnish
Shesader
Garrabost
Eye Peninsula
Melbost Pt
Melbost
STORNOWAY
Bayble Bay
Ruthe Dubh
Chicken Head
Holm an Draighin
Arnish
Poll a Charnain
Grimshader
Ranish Pt
S

[End Map-C]

3:Geddes K-4,5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

102
103
13
311


WEST LOCH TARBERT
Sound of Taransay
Toe Head
Gasker
Pabbay
Sound of Pabbay
Sound of Spuir
Berneray
Ensay
Carminish Islands
Killegray

THE EDINBURGH GEOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE

[End Map-D]

3:Geddes K-4,5 (1919-1952) 1955 ES10 Highland Scots
Lewis and Harris

102
103
13
311

Loch Erisort
Loch Shell
Forest of Harris
Ulleval
Clisham
NORTH HARRIS
LOCH SEAFORTH
Eishken
WEST LOCH TARBERT
Tarbert
EAST LOCH TARBERT
SOUTH HARRIS
SOUND
VEGET
By M

[End Map- E]

102
103
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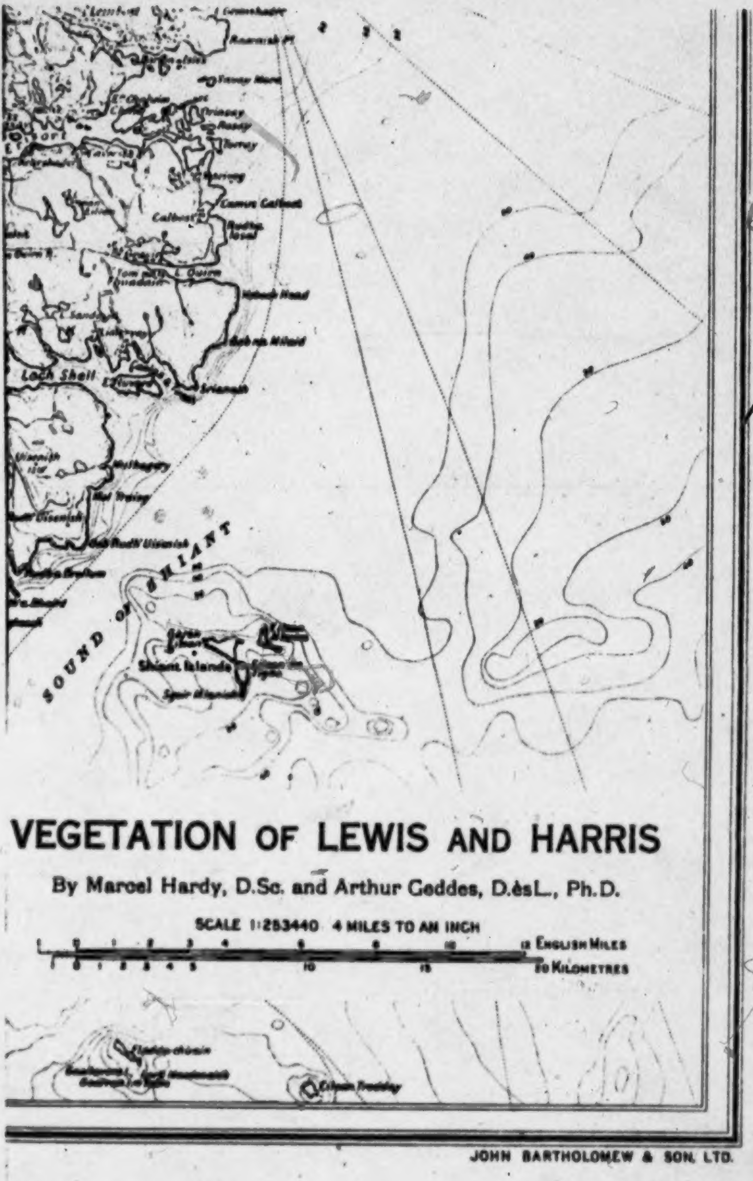
Loch Shell
SOUND OF SHIANT
Shiant Islands

VEGETATION OF LEWIS AND HARRIS

By Marcel Hardy, D.Sc. and Arthur Geddes, D.èsL., Ph.D.

SCALE 1:253440 4 MILES TO AN INCH

12 English Miles
20 Kilometres

JOHN BARTHOLOMEW & SON, LTD.

[End Map-F]

3: Geddes

427
621
642

[For information on the sale, purchase and ownership of Lewis and Harris, see category 423, pp. 230-234; 257-274.]

585
788
852
88

[For additional general information on runes and rites at various phases of the life-cycle, see category 796, pp. 158-192, passim.]

741

[For information on the philanthropic activities of Baron Leverhulme of Bolton-le-Moors, Lever of Port Sunlight, see category 159, pp. 257-273.]

178
668

[For information on the Reformation and its effect upon the church in Scotland, see category 798, pp. 193-198.]

316
317
372

[For information on collection of peat, see category 314.]